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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

including

ANECDOTES OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTERS WHO APPEARED IN FRANCE DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH;

with

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

By the

AUTHOR OF THE SWISS EMIGRANTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

BOOK XIII.

Brienne had distinguished himself in the States of Languedoc. He had there shewn the abilities suited to his office; and within a small sphere of administration, had rendered it possible to believe him an able man. Like Calonne, he had that quick, hasty, determined character which imposes on the multitude. He had something too of the address of Maurepas. But he had neither the pliancy and agreeable manners of the one, nor the look of good humour and affability of the other. Naturally artful, subtle, penetrating, he neither could

conceal these qualities, nor wished to conceal them. His look, while it observed, looked through you; even in his gaiety there was something which prevented you from being at ease; and his expression had something too sly, which disposed you to mistrust. In his intellectual character, there was a sagacity which resembled cunning; his ideas were clear, and extended tolerably far, but only over the surface; he had some information, but quite scattered; glimpses rather than views; a mind, if I may so speak, glittering like a cut diamond from a number of little surfaces. In great subjects he could easily make himself master of the minute details, but was quite incapable of comprehending the whole. His moral character displayed the most keen priestly selfishness, and the eagerness of avarice united in the highest degree with that of ambition. In a world which merely skims over the surface, Brienne knew how to employ a sort of political small-talk, concise, rapid, interrupted with those intervals of myste-

tious silence, by which a man seems to intimate that, had he chosen, he could have said a great deal more, and which leave something vague and unlimited in the opinion formed of his capacity. This manner of bringing himself forward while he pretended to conceal himself, this apparent ability which was mere reserve and discretion, this alternate use of half words and of studied silence, with sometimes a slight and disdainful censure of any thing that was not done by himself, wondering that nobody saw how it might have been done better; in this really consisted the whole art and secret of Brienne. He shewed only patterns of himself, and even these were often not of his own stuff. Nevertheless, in almost every circle where political reputation was determined, no one doubted that when he became minister, his head would be replete with grand views, and his portfolio filled with the most luminous projects: He became minister, and his portfolio and his head were found equally empty.

In the shipwreck of Calonne he appeared merely to have collected his wrecks: he presented nothing to the parliament but his edicts of the stamp-duty and land-tax. He might have supported himself by the authority of the notables; and by laying before them the two fatal alternatives of the states-general and of bankruptcy, he had powerful means of bringing them to acknowledge the necessity of taxes. All he could do was to dismiss them. Nothing was determined in this assembly.

He heard the nation loudly demanding the recal of Necker; and by soliciting the king to comply with this demand, he might have raised his character, and strengthened himself in the eminent post which he occupied. Thus too he might have eased himself of the burden of the finances, might have secured his tranquillity, made his elevation be viewed as a blessing, and thrown a veil of dignity over the indecent magnitude of his own fortune. His lazy incapacity might thus have been concealed; in a word, he

might have acted like an able and an honest man; but he never had that magnanimity. A fatal dread of being supplanted, of having the first place occupied by another, prevailed in his mind. In vain did his friends urge him to call to his aid the man named by the public voice; he answered, '*The king and the queen do not wish it.*' 'It is in your power,' said Montmorin, 'to persuade the queen that Necker is necessary, and I myself undertake to persuade the king.' Brienne, when pressed so closely, replied, '*I can do without him.*' Thus it is that empires fall.

Tired of hearing the public calling eagerly for Necker, he took pleasure in seeing him lashed by hungry writers, whom he is asserted to have paid for calumniating him. Meanwhile he saw himself lost in the void of his own ideas. In less than five months he tried two comptrollers-general, Villedeuil and Lambert; the incapacity of both was soon evident. A new council of finance,

a deliberative committee, every thing was acceptable except Necker, and yet every thing was equally useless. In the very last extremity he still attempted to employ temporary expedients; but nothing succeeded. Having lost his way, sailing without a compass, he no longer knew what impulse to give to the helm of the state. In his conduct and character he was always in contradiction with himself, for, with all his temerity, he was irresolute—with all his boldness, pusillanimous. There was nothing which he would not venture upon, or which, after venturing, he did not give up almost immediately; so that he never ceased to endanger and to weaken the royal authority, making himself at once odious by despotism, and contemptible by thoughtlessness and want of stability.

With the view of gaining the public favour, he began with endeavouring to establish provincial assemblies; and by rendering them elective and dependent upon the people, he rashly and thought-

lessly granted what would have demanded the greatest reflection. Despotic as he was, he would have wished to appear popular, and to be accounted a republican; but this character was very ill supported.

After having dismissed the notables, he sent to the parliament his two edicts of the stamp-duty and land-tax, as if they could have been passed without any difficulty, and on their first appearance. But then it was that young and hot heads had begun to pass those respectable boundaries, and to agitate those critical and delicate questions of public right, which were soon debated with such warmth and temerity. Yet he gave himself no uneasiness: in the sittings and debates of parliament, he appeared even to have forgotten his favourite talent, address and insinuation. There was no negotiation, no conference, no way left open for accommodation; he wished to overpower them, and to carry every thing by main force. The magistracy were disgusted by seeing him so arrogant and

inflexible, and all the parliaments of the kingdom formed at once a determination of rejecting the new edicts even before they were sent. All that Brienne did against this insurrection, which threatened the royal authority, was to reject every mode of conciliation, and to abandon public affairs to the hazard of events.

The parliament of Paris asked him to lay before them his financial accounts: this demand was well founded, for it was impossible that the parliament should suit the amount and duration of the taxes to the real exigencies of the state, unless they knew what these exigencies were. The right of remonstrance involved that of examination; nor could he, without exacting a slavish obedience, refuse to enlighten them upon their duty. This was what Brienne would never listen to. He did not see that it was more necessary than ever to have the taxes formally debated upon and accepted in the name of the people, and that, if the right of the parliament to verify and

confirm the edicts were disputed in any way whatever, the nation would find representatives who would be less easily dealt with. This was what the minister and the parliament together ought to have foreseen and prevented.

In order to cut short the difficulty, Brienne made the king hold a Bed of Justice* at Versailles, in which, by his express order, the edict of the stamp-duty and land-tax were registered; this old engine was quite foreign to the present age. Next day, the parliament having declared null and illegal the engrossing of the two edicts on their registers, the expedient proposed by Brienne was to send the parliament into exile, and to disperse all its members.

Lamoignon,† keeper of the seals, a man of a frank and steady character, joined to great prudence, victoriously opposed in the council this opinion of Brienne: he shewed that dispersed magistrates would be quite inaccessible to negoti-

* See Note (1) at the end. † See Note (2).

ation, and he concluded by telling the king, that though the translation of the sovereign courts might sometimes be useful, the individual exile of the magistrates would be always imprudent.

Brienne, to whom this idea of translation appeared quite new, presently adopted it, and made the king sign letters patent which transferred the parliament from Paris to Troies. The keeper of the seals asked a short delay, but he was not listened to; Brienne said to him, in the presence of the king, 'Your ideas are excellent, but you are too slow in your determinations.' Scarce was the parliament arrived at Troies, when Brienne, in a conference with the keeper of the seals, recollected, as it were by chance, that the presence of this court would be necessary for his loans in the month of November. 'Had I thought of that sooner,' exclaimed he, 'I would not have sent them into exile; they must be instantly recalled:' and presently his emissaries were set in motion. (These

particulars I heard from the keeper of the seals.)

Lamoignon, who had been a member of the parliament before being keeper of the seals, had intimated the views he had formed for the reformation of our laws; he was known to be contriving means for simplifying the mode of procedure, and rendering it less tedious and expensive. This, in the eyes of that ancient body, was a kind of hostility which made him feared and hated. Brienne having learnt this aversion of the parliament for the keeper of the seals, took into his head to promise the dismissal of that minister if they would become tractable. 'My letter is sent off,' said he to Lamoignon, after having written. 'What letter?' asked Lamoignon.—'That,' replied Brienne, 'in which I have promised your disgrace if they will act reasonably; but do not you be at all anxious.'

The letter arrived at Troies; on its appearance a sudden change was wrought

in every mind. They became persuaded that their exile, the authoritative and despotic measures of the ministry, were the actions of him who had long meditated the ruin of the magistracy. Brienne, left to himself, would have been more weak and more timid; this character of vigour which they saw him constantly first assume and then lay aside, was not his own; he borrowed it from Lamoignon; that was the man who must be destroyed; nothing should be spared to destroy the common enemy. On this condition it was, that the edict of the *vingtiemes* passed; for as to those of the land-tax and stamp-duty, Brienne had found himself under the necessity of withdrawing them. But he reckoned upon a considerable loan, and thought he had gained a kind of triumph in having abused and recalled the parliament. I must not omit, that in order to acquire more weight and dignity in his negotiation, he had attempted to prevail upon the king to name him Prime minister; and that

the issue of this attempt, which at first was very ill received, had been to declare him Principal minister.

The parliament came to Versailles: the reconciliation seemed complete, and Brienne, on the same day, said to the keeper of the seals—'You see how well I have managed; had I not promised these people your dismissal, both you and I were in danger of not continuing here long.' But while Brienne fancied himself deceiving the parliament, it was himself that was deceived.

From the terms of the edict which was to be passed, he reckoned that the two *vingtiemes* would be levied exactly upon all property without exception, in proportion to the actual revenue. The parliament, on the contrary, pretended that this edict should change nothing in the ancient mode of collection; that it gave no authority for any new inquiry or examination; and all the parliaments united in declaring, that if a fiscal inquisition were practised upon their

property, they would oppose it to the utmost. They were supported in this opposition by a considerable party of the privileged bodies; and to intimidate the ministry they raised a cry for the States-general.

As the vices of the private character are sometimes united with public spirit, it is possible that there might be, among the clergy and nobility, men of warm minds, who were so much struck by the inveterate abuses of arbitrary authority, as sincerely to wish for the meeting of the states-general, as the sole and indispensible remedy; but taking the mass of men together, this appeal to the nation could be nothing more than a dissembled threat, or an impulse of blind passion. They must have known well that, to privileged bodies, to favoured classes, the people were the most formidable of all tribunals; that the latter, overloaded with taxes, would never be disposed to grant to the former an exemption that did not extend to themselves; and as these

bodies had every thing to fear from the discussion of their privileges, it was not at all probable that they should prefer intrusting them to the debates of a popular assembly, to treating with a reasonable and conciliating minister. Brienne, instead of shewing the parliament how dangerous their demands were, thought only of evading them, and made a proposal that the provinces should subscribe for the *vingtieme*. Many consented; others, encouraged by the resistance of the parliaments, would not listen to any composition.

The battle was begun, the parliaments were about to issue the prohibitory decrees, which formed their *corps de reserve*, and threatened to prosecute every man as an exactor and extortioner, who, in estimating or collecting the *vingtieme*, should conform to the royal edicts; the whole kingdom was like to be in flames from one end to the other, when the minister, suddenly affecting a different kind of assurance, caused a decree of

council be passed, by which the king declared the condition of his finances to be so good, as to make any new extension of the vingtiemes unnecessary. At the same time, he prepared a decree for a loan of sixty millions* at ten per cent. on annuities; and it was determined that the king in person should go to the parliament, and cause this edict to be registered.

Two days previous to the royal sitting, the keeper of the seals having come to Paris, was visited by a man whose turbulent and daring character had brought him into distinguished notice among the young magistrates, and rendered him their orator. It was Duval d'Espremenil, a judge in the court of Inquest. He told Lamoignon, that a loan of sixty millions would be quite insufficient; that he must open one of five hundred millions,† to be paid by instalments in the course of five years; that this time and these funds might be employed in restoring order to the finances, and that then the states-general might be assembled.

* £2,500,000. † Nearly £17,000,000.

Brienne, on receiving the letter in which Lamoignon transmitted to him this advice, leaped for joy, and not doubting that the message came to him from the court of Inquest, replied, that he made no hesitation in availing himself of this overture. 'By that means,' said he, 'I shall have nothing to do with the parliament for five years.' Immediately he ordered an edict to be prepared, for loans amounting to four hundred and eighty millions,* which should be successively paid in the course of five years, at the end of which he promised to assemble the states-general. Meanwhile he promised a saving of fifty millions,† both by the reduction of expence, and the improvement of the revenue, which would provide for the interest of the loan. But, as if in the sitting which he was to make the king hold, his object had been to revolt instead of tranquillizing men's minds, he made the king and the keeper of the seals assume the most severe tone;

* £16,000,000. † Above £2,000,000.

the parliament were reminded of their an cient maxims respecting the absolute powe and complete independence of kings; o the words written in their own decrees, tha to the king alone belonged the sovereig power in the kingdom; that he was ac countable to God alone for the exercis of the supreme power; that the legis lative power resided in the person of th sovereign, independent and undivided and as for the states-general, they stoo on the defensive, saying, that to the kin alone belonged the right of assemblin them; that he alone was the prope judge whether this measure was usefu and necessary; that the three orders as sembled would, with regard to him, b only a more numerous council, and tha he would be always the supreme arbite of their statements and grievances. No thing could, in the present circumstances be more idle than this haughty language The effervescence of men's minds be came only the more violent, their pas sions were inflamed, and the sitting be

came tumultuous. The king, in the mere expectation of receiving advice and information, had permitted them to give their opinions aloud; many made an indecent abuse of this liberty; and the bitter and violent censure which was mixed with their opinions, shewed the king too clearly that they thought themselves entitled to examine, not his edicts only, but his conduct and his reign. He kept silence during the space of seven hours, that the opinions were delivered; and though deeply affected by the licentious tone which was assumed, he did not allow the least symptom of impatience to escape him. From this time, therefore, began the trial of that patience, of which afterwards he stood so much in need.

However, the great bulk of the opinions concluded with demanding the assemblage of the states-general for the month of May in the following year; and d'Espremenil said to the king—'I see this wished-for word about to escape

your lips; let your majesty pronounce it, and your parliament subscribes your edicts.' Had the king yielded, there is no doubt that the edicts would have passed. But Brienne had exhorted him not to listen to any condition; but to adhere to the principle, that wherever the king was present, his will was law.

After all, notwithstanding the silence of the king, and the refusal expressed by it, many have supposed, that had he allowed the votes to be collected, the majority would still have been in favour of accepting the edicts. But he, punctually exact in observing what had been prescribed by his minister, ordered the edicts to be engrossed without any collection of votes; and, at the same time, a declaration to be registered, by which all the parliaments in the kingdom were prorogued. The Duke of Orleans, who was beginning by that time to act his part, protested, in the king's presence, against this act of authority; and as soon as the king went out, the assembly, in

which the peers still continued, adhered by a decree to the prince's protest.

Next day the great deputation of the parliament was ordered to Versailles. The king cancelled the decree of the preceding evening, prohibited any new deliberation upon the same subject, exiled the Duke of Orleans to Villers-Cotterels, and two judges in the high court, Freteau and Sabatier, one to the castle of Ham, and the other to Mount Saint-Michael.

From that time a general league was formed by the parliament against ministry; and Brienne, despairing of being able to subdue, resolved to annihilate them. With this daring plan, which he proposed to the council, he combined that of a permanent *cour pleniere* for registering the laws.

At this meeting of council, Lamoignon opposed, but in vain, the plan of the *cour pleniere*. He was more successful in opposing the destruction of the high magistracy; a measure which, he said, was

too violent, and which Maupeou had brought into discredit. In its stead he proposed a plan to weaken the influence and force of resistance of the parliament of Paris, by erecting, within its jurisdiction, considerable bailiwicks, the powers entrusted to which would extinguish the greater number of law-suits, and would supersede the necessity of the chamber of Inquest, a tumultuous and noisy meeting, from which it would be a desirable object to free themselves. This simple and certain mode of weakening the parliament by the augmentation of bailiwicks was likely to be agreeable to the people; it shortened the mode of procedure, saved clients from the expence of long journeys, and from being plundered by their lawyers in the course of a tedious appeal; and with regard to a jurisdiction so vast as that of Paris, this project carried in itself the proof of its excellence. Brienne resolved to extend it to all the parliaments of the kingdom; and, without calculating the mass

of resistance which he would thus have to overcome, he directed the keeper of the seals to draw up the plan and to prepare the edict. At the same time, he traced out a form for the *cour pleniere*, which he thought so commanding as to secure respect and obedience to the laws. This great operation was the secret concealed under the bed of justice, which assembled in May 1788. But the silence which was observed about what was then to be done, the order given to the governors of provinces to repair to their stations, the dispatches sent to the commanders of those cities in which the parliaments resided, and, perhaps also, some treachery on the part of the printers, betrayed the design of attacking the magistracy, and put that body on their guard. On the 5th of May, therefore, three days previous to the bed of justice, the parliament met and protested against whatever should be done at that meeting. They entered also into a promise, confirmed by the most solemn oath, not to

resume their functions, except in the same place, and with their whole body assembled, without suffering any one of its members to be separated or excluded.

As soon as the court was informed of the resolution into which the parliament had entered, and of d'Espremenil being its mover, Brienne obtained an order from the king to arrest that dangerous man; and d'Espremenil having, just as they came to arrest him, taken refuge in the high court, which was then sitting, was there taken, and led prisoner to the island of Sainte-Marguerite.

The bed of justice which was held at Versailles on the 8th of May, was held on the same day by the governors of provinces in all the parliaments of the kingdom; and the laws which were promulgated, though almost all conformable to the wishes of the nation, met everywhere with equal resistance. The administration of justice was to be better distributed through the provinces, the tribunals less remote, the appeals not so

frequent, great causes reserved for the superior courts, while the smaller would be brought to a determination with less time and expence. A reform in criminal law was promised, and already begun, by which a month was to elapse between the condemnation of the criminal and his execution; torture was to be abolished; a compensation granted by the law to the man against whom a groundless prosecution had been raised; and an obligation imposed upon the judge, that, while inflicting the punishment, he should specify the crime. All this seemed desirable; and, besides, it was promised that there should be a meeting of the states-general before the end of five years, and the king's word was given to render their meetings periodical; all the new taxes were to be accepted by the nation itself, and the other laws registered by a tribunal for that express purpose, in which causes of forfeiture alone should be judged: in all this there was nothing which, with a view to the future, seemed at all alarming.

But, in the first place, till the time arrived for assembling the states-general, the ruin of the parliament sseemed to overthrow the only barrier that could be opposed to the despotism of ministers; in the second place, this *cour pleniere*, the very name of which would have given disgust, suggested the idea of an oligarchical tribunal, the more formidable as it would be invested with all the national force, and with all the ceremonial of law.

This tribunal, which was to be composed of officers of the crown, of commanders of armies, of the peers and grandees of the kingdom, of magistrates chosen by the king, and of that high court of parliament which had at all times been faithful and submissive to the sovereign authority, seemed likely to be too powerful a counterpoise to the assembly of the states.

This bed of justice, therefore, was viewed by the nation as no more than despotism disguised under a specious appearance of public advantage. The course

of justice, which was suspended throughout the whole kingdom, excited an universal murmur; and, in Paris, the avenues to the hall where the parliament sat were inundated. The citizens were tranquil, they knew that the quarrel between the parliament and the court arose from the refusal of the latter to consent to the equal imposition of the *vingtiemes;* and this refusal did not dispose them to unite with the privileged class. But Paris contains a great mass of persons, who observe, with an envious eye, the pleasures which surround them, and impatiently endure the labour and poverty which falls to their share. These, from a vague hope of some fortunate change in their condition, croud hastily at the first signal of disorder, and rally round any factious man who promises them a milder lot. This multitude, surrounding the court in which the parliament was held, strengthened the party of its defenders. The magistrates applied to the populace for protection; and, under the eyes of the

police, all the excesses of the coarsest licentiousness were committed with impunity: a pernicious example, which was afterwards but too well imitated. The parliament, therefore, were the first to provoke insurrection in the mob. The goodness of the king led him always to shun the adoption of vigorous measures. He ordered that guards should be stationed at the avenues to the hall of parliament; but that they should employ their arms only in securing the life and tranquillity of the citizens. Thus it was that the tumult was restrained and suppressed without violence. Nevertheless, whether through the inaction of a feeble and timid police, or through the impulse of those, who, while they excited disturbance among the Parisian populace, assured them of impunity, the seditious movements continued always to increase.

In the provinces, the despotism which was exercised by each of the parliaments in its own jurisdiction, the security which their members enjoyed amid the

vexations which they practised upon their neighbours, their arrogance, their pride, were not calculated to render their cause interesting; but, in consequence of their connections with the privileged class, they formed, when combined with it, a numerous and powerful party. Even the people had allowed themselves to be convinced, that the cause of the parliaments was their own. In Britanny, and in other provinces, they were led to believe that new and odious taxes were in agitation: and the magistrates themselves stooped so low as to circulate these falsehoods.

In the midst of these agitations, Brienne learned, that the nobility of Britanny were sending twelve deputies to remonstrate to the king, upon the iniquity of his bed of justice. Presently the minister of the king's household, the Baron de Breteuil, was ordered to conduct the patroles to Senlis, to wait for them there, and to force them to return. The order was ill executed; the deputies passed; but

scarce were they arrived, when they were sent to the Bastile. Immediately the Breton nobility, instead of twelve deputies, sent fifty-four. These last were admitted to the king's presence, and the other twelve set at liberty. The Baron de Breteuil, when accused by Brienne of not having properly followed his directions, made no secret of his repugnance to do what he did not approve, and asked permission to retire. At this very time the province of Dauphiny raised the standard of liberty, by assuming to itself that constitution which was boasted as a model, and had afterwards so much influence. In the new form which Dauphiny gave to its states, the *Tiers Etat* had the half of the votes. Brienne, with his natural rashness, sanctioned this arrangement, never looking to any thing beyond the present moment. At last his own weakness, and the general insurrection of the parliaments, forced him to yield; and he agreed to what he had refused with the greatest obstinacy. By a decree of coun-

cil of the 8th of August, he made the king promise to assemble the states-general in the month of May following; a resolution which was formed too late, and which only announced the termination of his ministerial career.

The finances were ruined, the coffers of the king empty; there was no new tax, no new loan, no hope of credit, but on all sides the most pressing necessities; the annuities on the city, the pay of the troops, were all likely to fail at once. Nothing less could have forced upon Brienne the conviction of his own incapacity, or, at least, of the impossibility of his extricating the state out of this abyss of misery. He resolved to consummate his dishonour; and by a decree of council, on the 16th of August, he declared that two-fifths of the payments from the royal treasury should be made in government paper. The maledictions of the public poured upon him like a deluge; then, at last, he resolved to ask the recal of Necker. But Necker refused to become

his associate. He replied, that if he had still any hope of being useful to the state, this hope was founded on the confidence with which the nation honoured him, and that in order to preserve any credit for himself, there was one obvious condition which he must attach to his return. 'This reply is my doom,' said Brienne to the keeper of the seals, 'I must yield my place;' and he gave in his resignation on the 23d of August 1788.

He did not leave in the royal treasury above four hundred thousand livres,* either in money or in effects; yet, the evening before his departure, he sent and drew his twenty thousand livres† of monthly salary, though that month was not yet expired: an attention the more remarkable, as, without mentioning the emoluments of his office, and a pension of six thousand livres‡ attached to his blue riband, he possessed property to the amount of six hundred and sixty-eight thousand livres§ a-year; and he had recently cut down

* £17,000. † Above £800. ‡ £250. § £28,000.

wood on one of his estates, which had produced a million.*

The respect which Necker had enjoyed was augmented during his disgrace; but the greater encouragement he derived from public esteem, the more anxiety must he have felt on account of the situation of the kingdom.

Around the capital sixty square leagues of the richest territory were completely laid waste by a storm of hail, on the eve of harvest; the crop was bad through all the rest of the kingdom, the price of corn was raised still higher by the dread of famine, while there were no funds, and no credit to supply the urgent necessity of importing it: the funds discredited, and bearing scarcely any value, while every mode of raising loans and taxes was at a stand. On one side, the produce of the taxes was necessarily diminished, while on the other, the expence was as necessarily augmented. Instead of the contributions to which the inhabitants of the country

* £42,000.

are usually subjected, it was necessary that immediate aid should be given to those places which had been ruined by the hail. The tribunals were inactive, licentiousness was everywhere left unpunished, the police was intimidated; even the discipline of the troops was shaken, and the principle of obedience and fidelity, upon which it rests, was undermined. All the ancient public law was discussed and doubted, and all classes and ranks in the state, though they could not agree with each other or with themselves about what the states-general ought to be, agreed in calling out for them with the utmost eagerness, and in the mean time would not hear of any supply. Such was the tremendous crisis in which Necker found the kingdom.

His first care was the restoration of order: the interdict upon the parliaments was withdrawn, justice resumed its course, and the police was again put in motion. The treasury, which had been empty at Necker's arrival, seemed to be filled at once; the payments were renewed; and

if the decree of the 16th of August, which had spread such consternation, was not immediately revoked, at least it was never acted upon: every thing was paid in specie, and some weeks after, a new decree of council completely wiped off the shame of Brienne's bankruptcy.

While this disgraced minister was allowed to sink into contempt, the public hatred had fallen on Lamoignon, who was viewed as his accomplice; it became necessary to sacrifice him. Nevertheless, as I owe more to truth than to public opinion, I will venture to say, that in Lamoignon the king lost a good minister, and the state a good citizen. Deceived by the reputation which Brienne had usurped, Lamoignon had at first thought that he could do nothing better than unite with him, under the reciprocal promise of acting in concert. He was not long in discovering the emptiness and levity of his head: but when he saw him involved in difficulties, he often warned him, sometimes stopped, and

never abandoned him. The fault, or the misfortune of Lamoignon, consisted in having united himself with such an associate. He was ardently desirous of doing good, and tenderly loved the king: he told me himself that he did not know a better or worthier man; and full of that old spirit of integrity, which descended to him from his ancestors, he seemed to have taken courage and loyalty for his characteristic virtues. Even the hatred of the parliaments redounded to his praise. The esteem and the secret confidence of the king had followed him to his retreat at Baville. But either the vexation of exile, or some domestic affliction, brought on his death on the 18th of May 1789, and saved him from seeing objects which would have killed him with grief.

Necker had assumed an ascendant in the council, which will be easily conceived, when we consider what his return to the ministry produced. A winter as severe, and longer than that of 1709,

made the efforts of this minister appear still more astonishing. Without any new tax, or any new loan that was known of, by means only of a little delay which excited no complaint, the annuities, the pensions, the debts, as they became due, were regularly discharged, Corn, pouring into our harbours from all the countries of the world, saved us from famine; aid was granted to the unfortunate labourers, relief to the sick, to the old, to the children abandoned in the hospitals; immense sums were expended in securing and in accelerating the arrival of subsistence. Such were the services which Necker rendered to the state; and it is probable that, had he continued in ministry without interruption, and been allowed to avail himself of the advantages of peace, he would have brought the kingdom into such a prosperous condition, that no one would have thought of the states-general; no one, at least, would have proposed them.

But when the king had once promised

to assemble them in the month of May, it was not easy for Necker to make him break that engagement, without alienating the minds of the nation. Besides, (he made no secret of it) he wished from the bottom of his heart the meeting of the states: 'I thought,' said he, talking of his conduct at this period, 'I thought that by maintaining tranquillity in the kingdom, by propping up the sinking edifice of the finances, by relieving the want of subsistence, and by thus paving the way for the greatest and most desirable of events, I should have sufficiently fulfilled my task; I should have acquitted my duty as a public man, as a good citizen, and as the faithful servant of a king who wished the public good. As for the motives by which he was animated, he has explained them himself. 'I knew,' said he, 'better than any one, the unstable and transitory nature of that good which could be done under a government where the principles of administration changed with every minister,

and ministers with every intrigue. I had observed, that amid the constant changes of administration, no general idea had time to be established, no benefit could become permanent.' He remembered that cabinet of Maurepas, to which he himself never went without fear and melancholy, when it became necessary to speak of reform and economy to a minister grown old amid the pomp and expensive habits of the court. The opposition and disgust which he had often experienced, and the contests in which he was under the necessity of engaging, had made so deep an impression upon him, that he viewed the states-general as a harbour of safety for the nation.

But, notwithstanding the advantages of that assembly, it had also its dangers; and the form, in particular, which it should assume, would be of the last importance.

Necker appeared at first unwilling to take upon himself the risk of this primary operation. He advised the king

to call the assembly of the notables, whose zeal he had experienced, and to consult with them.

The examples of former times, with regard to the formation of the states-general, were various and changeable. But the greater number of these examples was favourable to the privileged class; and if that of 1614 was followed, as the parliament demanded, and expected to obtain, the order of nobility and clergy would be secure of preponderance. Their rights, their privileges, would be preserved; and the parliament, in return for the service which it should have rendered, might expect, in the interval of these assemblies, to be established as their perpetual representative. But, among the body of the people, the public mind had assumed a character which no longer suited with the pretensions of the parliamentary and feudal class. The labourer in the fields, the artizan in the city, the honest citizen employed in his business, sought only for relief, and if left to themselves, would have chosen

only peaceable characters to represent them. But in the cities, and, above all, at Paris, there is a class of men, who, though distinguished from the people by education, are attached to it by birth, and when its rights are in agitation, make its cause their own, afford it the assistance of their information, and inspire it with their passions. In this class, a spirit of daring innovation had long been forming, which was every day acquiring more force and influence.

The recent example of North America, which had asserted its independence by its own courage and by the aid of our arms, was extolled without ceasing. The vicinity of the English, the more frequent habit of travelling into their country, the study of their language, the fashion of reading their books, the constant perusal of their public papers, the eager curiosity about what was said and done in their parliament, the warmth of the praises which were given to their orators, the interest which was taken in

their debates, in short, the very affectation of their tastes and manners; all these things announced an approaching disposition to assimilate with them: and really the view of this public liberty and perfect security, this worthy and noble use of the right of property in the free acceptance and equal division of the taxes required for the exigencies of the state, might justly excite in us a sentiment of emulation. After such examples, well-informed, restless, and daring men, everywhere warned the people not to forget their rights, and called upon the minister to attend to them.

The minister sought only to support the rights of the people; for the league between the parliaments, the nobility, and the clergy against the royal authority, had forced him to consider the people as a refuge for the king. But he felt himself too weak against so great a mass of power and influence, and had need of being strongly supported.

This support he was not very sure of

obtaining from the assembly of notables. An assembly composed chiefly of the church, the army, and the law, and in which the representatives from the cities would not even have a third of the votes, was not likely to be very favourable to the commons.

But whatever might be the result of the deliberations, men's minds would be put in motion throughout the whole kingdom, and the great political interests which were agitated within this assembly, would be agitated still more warmly without. From that quarter in particular, the minister expected his strength to come; and, perhaps, this pomp of consultation was only a mode of rousing the national opinion, or a signal for its display. The king had encouraged it by a decree of council previous to the dismissal of Brienne. It was probable, therefore, that the public opinion would command the notables. Already, during their first assembly in 1787, they had not only agreed, but had them-

selves demanded, that in the provincial assemblies proposed by Calonne, the number of members from the *tiers etat* should be equal to that from the nobility and clergy united. The question seemed, therefore, to be judged by themselves; and Necker merely allowed them the honour of confirming the decision. The same disposition in the states of Dauphiny had been loudly praised and extolled as a model. From all quarters, therefore, the notables were admonished to be favourable to the people; and there was no likelihood that after they had once been so, they should either wish or dare to be otherwise. In the assurance of this, the same assembly of 1787 was convoked anew on the 5th of October 1788, and met at Versailles on the 3d of November in the same year.

But when they came to deliberate upon the formation of this national council, of this supreme tribunal, in which their rights, their privileges, and all the greatest interests of their rank and fortune

were to be discussed, each of the orders thought only of the dangers it was about t incur.

The subjects upon which they were to deliberate were proposed in questions, the principal of which were—What should be the respective number of deputies from each order? What had been, and what should be, the form of deliberation? What should be the necessary qualifications for being electors, and for being eligible, in the order of the clergy, and in that of the *tiers etat*, whether in the country or in cities? Should these two qualities be determined by the amount of real property, or only by a quota of contribution; and what should that quota be?

The assembly was divided into six chambers, in each of which a prince presided; and the king required, that after the departments had each formed the final wish with respect to each of the questions proposed, these opinions, with the grounds on which they rested, ex-

plained at sufficient length, should be all transmitted to him, with the state of the votes upon each opinion.

In the department where Monsieur presided, the opinions were divided with respect to the number of deputies which each order should send; and by a majority of thirteen against twelve it was determined, that each deputation should be composed of four deputies, one from the church, one from the nobility, and two from the *tiers etat.*

The other five departments, some unanimously, and others by a great majority of votes, petitioned that the number of representatives should be equal in each of the three orders, and that the king should be besought not to violate this equality of votes, which they regarded as the safeguard of the state, as the surest support of the constitution, of civil and political liberty. They all conceived that no legal deliberation could be entered into, without the concurrence of the three orders; that two should have

no right to bind the third, and that thus the vote of a single order should be sufficient to secure its liberty. But this very principle established the right of equality with respect to each other. 'Such,' said they, 'is with us the balance of public strength; the *tiers etat* does not enjoy an unjust ascendant over the two other orders; but it is entitled to the same degree of power; it is not authorized to give law, but neither can it be domineered over. Now the double deputation, were it granted, would destroy this equal and independent relation: it would lead to the form of individual suffrage; it would make men think of, and contrive the means of bringing about this mode of voting, and who could calculate the pernicious consequences. The first deliberation of the states would be directed to this subject, and the effect would be to produce the most dangerous fermentation.'

Upon the second question, which respected the form of deliberation, there

was no difference of opinion, and with the exception of the department of *Monsieur*, which referred the choice to the states, all demanded that the orders should give their opinions separately.

The reasons urged by the minority for granting a double representation to the *tiers etat*, were, that supposing the opinions to be given by the orders separately, it was just and natural, that in an assembly where laws, arts, industry, commerce, agriculture, and the finances, would be constant subjects of deliberation, the class which was professionally informed upon all these subjects should possess, at least, an equal strength with the class which paid no attention to them; that it must often happen that the subject of deliberation might be of such a nature as to require individual suffrage; then, in particular, the right of the *tiers etat* to oppose two votes to the other two united, was as incontestable as the right which they possessed of not being eternally ruled over.

'No one,' continued they, 'can dispute the right which the States-general have to regulate their interior arrangements, and to determine the manner in which the votes shall be given and received. With regard to taxes, for instance, it would be impossible, without manifest injustice, to take the votes by individual suffrage, if out of three votes the *tiers etat* should have only one; for the interests of the nobility and the clergy upon this article being inseparable, their opinions would always coincide, and there would only be two parties, one of which would be double of the other.

With respect to the elections, all the departments, seduced by this principle, that confidence alone ought to determine the choice, rendered the qualifications for electing and being elected as slight as possible: no regard was paid to property, and by means of a moderate contribution, every householder, within his bailiwick, was to have the right of being an elector and of being eligible. In the same man-

ner every ecclesiastic, whose living and private property equalled the revenue of a village rector, might both elect and be elected.

Meanwhile the same questions were agitated out of the assembly; they were seized upon by the public; and in conversation, as well as in writing, the cause of the people was supported with warmth and vehemence.

Upon the opening of the assembly of the notables, in the committee where *Monsieur* presided, the Prince of Conti had remonstrated against those writings with which France was inundated. 'Be so good, sir,' said he, 'as represent to the king, how important it is for the stability of his throne, for laws, and for good order, that all the new plans should be proscribed for ever, and that the constitution and its ancient forms should be maintained entire.' Had Necker possessed this requisite degree of foresight, he would not have made the king answer, that this was not one of the.

subjects for which he had assembled the notables.

All the cities in the kingdom took an interest in the subject of the deputations, and urged, in favour of the *tiers etat*, not only the circumstance of their composing nine-tenths of the nation, and paying the two *vingtiemes*, but the still more incontestable political right which this laborious class derived from the importance of its labours. Brave and obedient in the armies, indefatigable in cultivating the fields, industrious in the cities; security, riches, abundance, strength, information, enjoyment of every kind, were all furnished by them; yet this class, the source and the preserver of all property, found a small number of men, for the most part rich and idle, disputing their right of equal deputation into the national council; and who, with the view of holding them in subjection, would have arrogated over them the ascendant of an eternal majority. Thus it was that the popular associations animated each other

to defend their rights; and this rising spirit of liberty, which it was alike necessary and difficult to suppress, took possession of every mind. The moment at last came, when, after having heard the opinions of the assembly of notables, and the demands from the cities and provinces of the kingdom, it became necessary for the king to form his final resolution. This was the object of the council of state, which was held on the 27th of December 1788. Necker there reported the opinions of the departments upon the most important subjects, and particularly upon the number of deputies from each of the three orders; and after having weighed together the reasons and authorities on both sides, he gave his own opinion. 'I think,' said he, 'that the king may and ought to call to the States-general a number of deputies from the *tiers etat*, equal to that of the deputies from the two other orders united; not, as might be feared, with the view of forcing individual suffrage,

but of satisfying the general and reasonable wish of the commons of his kingdom.' The advice of Necker was adopted by the council, and the king determined that the letters which were to summon the assembly should be written in conformity to it. Upon this essential article, therefore, Necker appeared to have consulted the notables, only in order to obtain the sanction of their opinion, if it should be favourable to the people, or to reject it if otherwise, and give the provinces time to make a public declaration of their sentiments.

Necker makes no secret of his wish to establish a proper and durable relation between the revenue and expence of the state, a prudent use of public credit, an equal distribution of taxes, a general plan of beneficence, an enlightened system of legislation; above all, a constitutional guarantee of civil and political liberty: and all these advantages could be hoped for from the States-general, only in so far as the just remonstrances

of the commons were respected. The *veto* of one of the three orders, if they should give their opinions separately, appeared to him a perpetual and invincible obstacle to the best resolutions. He wished, therefore, individual suffrage to be adopted; which would be equitable only in so far as the number of the commons should equal that of the clergy and nobility. It was the union of these two orders with the parliaments which had produced the resistance to the collection of the *vingtieme;* and it was with a view of breaking this union that recourse was had to the commons. Then too the language of the commons was expressive of the most proper sentiments, both for the royal authority and for the person of the king; and the minister was deceived by this language.

You have seen that the notables, by making the right of election and of eligibility to depend upon a moderate contribution, had rendered it independent of all real property, at the risk of allowing

the introduction of a great number of men indifferent to the fortune of the state. Necker, unfortunately deceived as to the attention which he expected the people would pay to make a proper choice of deputies, and as to the character of wisdom and probity, which a sacred respect for their functions would impress upon the popular deputies, thought, like the notables, that he ought to lay as little restraint as possible upon the freedom of election, and to fix at the very lowest the quota of taxation which was to qualify for being elected. This was one of his errors. When he allowed the *tiers etat* to be equal in number to the other two orders, he should have well foreseen, that a part of the clergy would join the people; and yet he gave this popular clergy every means of strengthening themselves in the first elections: all the curates were admitted, whilst he allowed the collegiates only a representative for each chapter. The curates, therefore, were likely to be elected in great numbers, and

to augment that party in the states, to which they were attached by the ties of blood, by their habits of life, and, above all, by the inveterate hatred which they cherished against the dignified clergy.

As this advantage, however, was too evident in case of individual suffrage being determined upon, the minister left the first orders at liberty to vote thus only with their own consent, a source of dissentions in which the weakest would infallibly be overwhelmed.

Here was the critical moment, when the conduct of this minister ceases to be blameless, and stands in need of apology. No man was ever farther than he from the base treachery of which the misfortunes of the time have made him be accused. But, it is too true, that nothing can excuse the blind confidence which he placed in a people with whom the *League* and the *Fronde* should have made him sufficiently acquainted.

Doubtless, in order to fulfil the duties of a private individual, of a citizen, and

of the servant of a young and virtuous monarch, it was necessary, as he says himself, to enlighten his justice, to direct his inclinations, and to make him enjoy the first privilege of a throne in the happiness of his people, and in their affecting benedictions. But he ought to have enlightened his wisdom as well as his justice; while conducting him, he should have warned him of the dangers he was about to incur, and instead of covering with flowers the brink of the precipice, should have carefully guarded him against it; he should have taken care that he was not exposing him to deadly insult instead of blessings. The king trusted wholly to the prudence of his minister; this imposed on the latter a sacred obligation to be cautious, timid, and distrustful. Here Necker was deficient. There were great evils to be feared, but he could foresee only good. His mind was solitary, abstracted, withdrawn into itself, and naturally lofty; he conversed little with men, and few men felt any temptation to con-

verse with him; he observed them only by glimpses, which were either too detached or too vague: hence those delusive ideas respecting the character of the populace. The continual struggle which he had to maintain against all the factions which were set in motion by private interest, had led him to form an unfavourable judgment of the court and of the higher circles; and this judgment was sound. But he had formed a fantastical and infinitely too flattering opinion of the great mass of the nation. He had heard this populace praising and blessing him; he had enjoyed their confidence, their affection, and their regret: they had avenged him under the weight of calumny which he had endured: their voice had recalled him from exile to the ministry, and still continued to support him. He was bound, not by gratitude only, but by his own benefits; and being obliged by his personal feelings to believe the people feeling and just, he was convinced that they would continue always the same.

His own, therefore, made him forget other examples, which would have warned him of the inconstancy of this people, of their levity, of the readiness with which they pass from one extreme to another, and allow themselves to be corrupted, led astray, worked up to frenzy and the most brutal fury.

In a class immediately above the people, but attached to their party, he did not consider how many passions, now obscure and timid, wanted only a common point of union to kindle and disclose themselves. Vanity, pride, envy, the ambition of governing, or, at least, of humbling those whom with a jealous eye they saw above themselves; meaner interests, and views still meaner, the speculations of avarice, the calculations of venality, all these eternal sources of faction and discord were elements which Necker seemed not to have perceived. The abstract and seducing idea of a mild, amiable, and generous nation, wholly engrossed his mind.

In this species of intoxication, he thought it impossible to grant too much favour to the popular party. After securing them a constant plurality of votes, he was going to add the advantage of place to that of number. The security, the liberty, the tranquillity of deliberation essentially required a place inaccessible to the insults of the populace, and easily secured from every kind of tumult; while his first thought was to place the states-general in Paris, amid a people of all others the most numerous, most easily moved to insurrection, and whose insurrections were the most formidable: it was only out of deference to the advice of the council, that he was satisfied with fixing them at Versailles, *statio male fida carinis.*

The hall, which was destined for the general assemblies, and in which the highest interests of the state were to be canvassed between the three orders, was surrounded by galleries, as if for the express purpose of inviting the populace to

interfere in the deliberations, by supporting their own party, while they threatened and insulted the other; and thus to change the house of assembly into a theatre, in which the actors were to be animated by their applause. I mention these particulars because they became of the most serious importance. But M. Necker could never consider the assembly of the states as any thing but a peaceful, commanding, and august spectacle, which the people would have to enjoy. His hopes could not fail to be mingled with anxiety; but, as he ascribed great power to moral ideas, he hoped that the surest means of preventing the disturbances which might arise from the dissention of the orders, was to animate them all with that enthusiasm for the public good, by which the greatest sacrifice, both of party and of private interest, is rendered easy and agreeable. He tried this, first by the publication of his report to the council of state of the 27th of December 1788; and hoped, by the example of

the king himself, to excite from that time the general emulation. After alluding to the confession which the king had made to him, that for some years past he had enjoyed only moments of happiness: 'Sire,' said he, 'you will recover this happiness, and will enjoy it. You rule over a nation who know what it is to love. Political novelties, of which they have not yet had sufficient experience, were able for a time to pervert their natural character; but attached as they will soon be, by your benefits, and confirmed in their confidence by the purity of your intentions, they will think only of enjoying the steady and happy order, which they will owe to you. This grateful nation does not yet know all that you intend to do for its happiness. You have told it, sire, to those ministers who are honoured with your confidence: you not only intend to fulfil the promise you have made, not to impose any new tax without the consent of the states; but you do not even intend to continue any tax

without this condition. You intend, besides, to secure the renewal of the states-general, and to consult them as to the interval which should elapse between their meetings, and as to the means of giving a lasting stability to these arrangements. In order to form a strong tie between the private administration of each province and the general legislation, you wish the deputies from each department of the kingdom to concert together the most proper plan, to which your majesty will then be disposed to give your consent. Your majesty wishes also to prevent, in the most efficacious manner, the disorder which the bad conduct or incapacity of your ministers might introduce into the finances; and, among the expences which you wish to be limited to a fixed amount, you do not except even those which more particularly concern your own person. It is the intention of your majesty to anticipate the lawful wish of your subjects by inviting the states-general themselves to examine the great question con-

cerning *lettres-de-cachet.* You, sire, desire only the maintenance of order, and wish to leave to the law every thing which it is capable of executing. Upon the same principle, your majesty is impatient to receive the advice of the states-general respecting the degree of liberty which ought to be granted to the press, and to the publication of works relating to the administration. In short, sire, you prefer, with reason, the durable deliberations of the states-general of the kingdom, to the transient advice of your ministers; and when you shall have experienced their wisdom, you will not be afraid to give them a stability which may produce confidence, and secure them from any variation in the sentiments of your royal successors.'

This discourse of the minister being printed, published, and circulated throughout the whole kingdom, as the solemn expression of the king's sentiments, gave him a lawful right to the confidence of the nation; and if, in pursuance of these

dispositions, the states had chosen to establish themselves as the supreme council of a king, who desired every thing that was just, and nothing that was otherwise; of a king who, uniting himself with the nation, was determined to place upon an immovable basis his own limited power, the pillar of liberty and of public happiness; then the French monarchy, without changing its nature, would have become the mildest, most moderate, and steadiest government that ever existed. The king, in this legislative council of the nation, was to preside, like a father consulting with his children, to settle their rights as a friend rather than an arbiter, and, in conjunction with them, to form into laws the means of rendering them happy. In this spirit it was, that the minister thought he was making every preparation for bestowing upon the nation, and for preserving to the crown, that character of greatness, of power, and of majesty, which they ought mutually to possess,

and which the one cannot possess fully without the other, (for such was the language of the king.)

But in a nation full of petulance and levity, which wishes to be suddenly free without having learned what liberty is, it is but too natural that the first violence should carry men beyond the proper limits; and when these limits are once overstepped, full scope is given to passion, to error, and to guilt.

BOOK XIV.

ALTHOUGH Paris was, as it were, the common centre of the fermentation excited throughout the kingdom, the primary assemblies there were sufficiently quiet, and appeared solely occupied with the choice of good electors, in order to have good deputies.

I was one of the electors named by the section *des Feuillans;* I was also one of the commissaries appointed to draw up the statement of their demands, and, I may say, that these demands contained nothing but what was useful and just. The spirit of this section, therefore, was reasonable and moderate.

It was otherwise with the electoral as-

sembly; the greater part were sound when they arrived; but we saw them assailed by a cloud of intriguing men, who came and breathed among us the contagious air which they had inhaled in their conferences with Duport, one of the factious members of the parliament.

Whether Duport was sincere in his dangerous fanaticism, or whether, having calculated, better than the rest of his body, those dangers which it was about to incur, he wished to acquire a political existence of his own; it was well known that the winter before, he had opened at his house a kind of school of republicanism, to which his friends took care to draw those minds which were most heated, or most likely to become so.

I observed this band of noisy and restless men contending with each other for the privilege of speech, impatient to display themselves, and aspiring to be registered among the list of orators. I was not long in seeing how great their influence would be; and raising my

thoughts from a particular example to a general observation, I became sensible, that in every division there would be such quibbling lawyers, who, being all accustomed to speak in public, would be ready as fit instruments of faction.

It is a well known truth that no people can govern itself; that the opinion, the will of an assembled multitude, is seldom or never any thing more than an impulse which it receives from a small number of men, and sometimes from a single man, who moves at pleasure their thoughts and inclinations. The people have passions, but these passions, slumbering as it were, wait till a voice comes to rouse and inflame them. They have been compared to the sails of a ship, which would remain loose and motionless if the wind did not swell them.

Now, it is well known, that to move the passions of the people was always the aim of eloquence in a public assembly; and with us the only school for this eloquence was the bar. Even those who,

by the habit of pleading, had acquired nothing but boldness and clamour, possessed a very great advantage over other men. A cool judgment, a steady and thoughtful mind, if deficient when necessary in a copious and ready elocution, could not keep its guard against the vehemence of a practised declaimer.

The surest method of propagating revolutionary doctrines throughout the kingdom had therefore been, to engage the body of advocates on their side, than which nothing had been easier. They were naturally republican, proud, and jealous of their liberty, fond of dominion from the habit of holding the fate of their clients in their hands, dispersed throughout the kingdom, possessed of the public esteem and confidence, holding a continual intercourse with all classes of society, and skilled in the art of rousing and commanding men's minds. The profession of advocates, therefore, were likely to possess an irresistible ascendant over the multitude,

some by the force of true eloquence, others by that noise and torrent of words which dazzles and imposes upon weak minds. In short, they could not fail to hold the first place in the popular assemblies, and to govern the public opinion; above all, when they held themselves forth as the avengers of the people's injuries, and the defenders of their rights.

This body itself had an obvious interest in seeing the reform changed into a revolution, the monarchy into a republic; their object was to organize a perpetual aristocracy. They were successively destined to be the movers of the republican faction, and nothing was more agreeable to ambitious men, who, possessing everywhere the authority of understanding and talents, would by turns be called to public functions, and would be almost the sole legislators of France; first its chief magistrates, and soon its real sovereigns.

The same prospect was opened not only to men of the law, but to all the

classes of well informed citizens, each of whom had sufficient confidence in his talents, to entertain the same hope and the same ambition.

I do not deny that this ambition had an honourable and a laudable pretext. In human institutions, it is impossible for every thing to be well; it is even infinitely rare that it unites the greatest good or the least ill that is possible. A government is always a machine more or less subject to frequent derangements. It it necessary, therefore, at least at intervals, either to regulate its movements, or to repair its springs; and when we examine the form of any state, whether monarchical or republican, there is none whose condition does not appear dreadful, when we see accumulated in the same description all the vices, all the abuses, and all the crimes of a former period. Thus it was that the reign of Lewis XVI was calumniated. Whatever were the errors and the faults which he himself had not been able to avoid, he,

sought only to obliterate every trace of them, and no one was more earnestly desirous than he of this salutary reform; but under the vague and deceitful name of reform, a revolution was disguised; and this error explains the almost universal success of a plan, which, as in various points of view it seemed useful and just, suited itself to every character, and conciliated the general wish.

The best citizens thought the wishes and intentions of the most wicked the very same with their own; whether men's minds were animated with the love of the public good, or with a desire of glory and dominion, or with a base envy, or with an infamous rage for plunder, all followed the same impulse, and the result of these different movements was the same, the subversion of the state. This appears to me to present an apology for a great number of men who have been supposed to be depraved, but who were only led astray.

It is conceivable, indeed, that some

men with the propensities of tigers, might have planned the revolution such as it was executed; but no one, I think, can dare to maintain that the French nation, that the very lowest populace, without any previous seduction, should have consented to this inhuman and impious conspiracy. It is false, therefore, that the crimes of the revolution were the crimes of the nation; and I am far from supposing that any of my colleagues in the electoral assembly could have so much as foreseen them.

A band of lawyers came to us, animated, I believe, with a blind enthusiasm for the public good. They were supported by a train of ambitious republicans, who aspired like them to become celebrated in the assemblies of a free people. Target, a man distinguished at the bar, and who, in other respects, had a very good character among us, acted the foremost part.

The government had sent us the minister of police as our president. This was a

false step, for it was one which could not be supported. An assembly cannot be fundamentally free, without having a president from its own body, and of its own choosing. This magistrate supported his office well: he compelled us to admire his firmness and his wisdom, but in vain. The cause was pleaded against him by the advocate Target; and the latter, as a reward for having defended the rights of the assembly, was proclaimed president.

Target was a champion long inured to the struggles of the bar, full of boldness and assurance, devoured with ambition, and escorted by a band of friends who loudly applauded him on every occasion. He began with insinuating himself into men's minds as a conciliating and pacific man. But, when he had got the command over this assembly of citizens, who were yet new to the functions of public men, he raised his head, and loudly proclaimed what he was. He did not content himself, as the duty of his place

required, with giving a faithful statement of the questions subjected to the assembly's examination; he dictated their opinion, instead of collecting and declaring it.

Our functions were not confined to the election of deputies; we had also, in giving them their instructions, to make up an account of our grievances; and each of these grievances gave occasion to new declamations. The indefinite words of equality, of liberty, of the sovereignty of the people, resounded in our ears; every man heard them, and made his own application. The regulations of police, the financial edicts, the gradations of authority, upon which the public order and tranquillity rested, were thought to bear a character of tyranny. A ridiculous importance was attached to the most minute circumstances, of which I shall mention only one example.

A discussion had taken place about the wall and the gates with which Paris was inclosed, which were denounced as suited

only for inclosing deer, but injurious to men.

'What, citizens!' said one of the orders, 'what do you think I saw engraved on one of the pillars at the gate of Saint Victor? I saw the head of an enormous lion, with its mouth open, and vomiting chains, with which it threatened the passengers. Is it possible to conceive a more frightful emblem of despotism and slavery?' The orator himself imitated the roaring of the lion. The whole audience was moved; and I, who passed so often the gate of Saint Victor, was astonished at never having been struck with this horrible image. This day, therefore, I paid particular attention to it; and I saw, by way of ornament upon the pilaster, a buckler suspended by a slender chain, which the sculptor had attached to a small lion's muzzle, such as we see at the knocker of a door, or the well of a fountain.

Intrigue had also its secret committees, which threw off all respect for those

principles and objects that had been held most sacred. Neither morality nor religious worship was spared. It was proved, according to the doctrine of Mirabeau, that civil policy was incompatible with morality, the religious spirit with patriotism, and old prejudices with new virtues. Royalty and tyranny, obedience and slavery, power and oppression, were represented as inseparable under the government of a single man.

On the contrary, the most absurdly extravagant hopes and promises were held out, of what was to happen when the people should be restored to their equal and independent rights. It appeared that we were to be governed by men of the age of gold. This free, wise, and just people, were to be always in unison with themselves, always enlightened in the choice of their councils and of their ministers, moderate in the use of their power, never erring, never deceived, never governed by those to whom their authority was entrusted.

Their will was to be law, and these laws were all to conduce to their happiness. Though I was left almost alone, and though my party in the electoral assembly grew weaker and weaker every day, I never ceased representing to every one who would listen to me, that this art of imposing upon the assembly by impudent declamation, appeared to me quite stupid and easy. My principles were well known, I made no secret of them; and care was taken to whisper about, that I was the friend of ministers, and loaded with favours from the king. The elections were made, and I was not chosen; the Abbé Sieyes was preferred. I thanked heaven for my exclusion; for I thought I foresaw what was to happen in the national assembly, with which, soon after, I was better acquainted.

We had in the French academy one of the fiercest partizans of the republican faction; it was Chamfort, an acute and penetrating genius, endowed with a very agreeable wit, when he amused himself

with the vices and the follies of society; but severe and keenly satirical against the superiority of rank and fortune, which wounded his jealous pride. Of all the envious men who were dispersed through the world, Chamfort was the man who could least forgive the rich and great for the opulence of their houses, and the pleasures of their table, which he himself was very glad to enjoy. In their own presence, in private, he courted, flattered, and was ingenious in pleasing them; there were even some whom he appeared to love and esteem, and upon whom he pronounced pompous panegyrics: always understanding, however, that if he was so complaisant as to be their inmate, and to lodge in their house, they by their credit must obtain for him from the court literary rewards; nor did he think them absolved by the pensions which he enjoyed to the amount of some thousand crowns: this was too little for him. 'These people,' said he to Florian, 'should get me twenty thousand livres* a-year; I

* £800.

deserve no less.' With this view, he had favourites among the great, whom he excepted from his satires. But, with regard to the cast in general, he lashed them without mercy; and when he thought their fortune and grandeur on the point of being overthrown, he no longer cared for any, threw them all off, and took the side of the people.

In our companies we were sometimes amused with the sallies of his humour; and, though I did not love him, I yet treated him with precaution and respect, not wishing to make him my enemy.

One day, therefore, when we were left alone at the Louvre, after the sitting of the academy, he said, 'Well, you are not a deputy.' 'No,' replied I, 'and I comfort myself like the fox about the grapes which he could not reach—they are too green.' 'Really,' replied he, 'I do not think them ripe enough for you. Your soul is of too mild and flexible a cast for the trial to which it would have been exposed. They judged well in reserving you

for another legislature. You are excellent for building, but can do little in the way of destroying.'

Knowing that Chamfort was the friend and confident of Mirabeau, one of the leaders of the faction, I thought myself at the fountain-head of information; and in order to get him to explain himself, I pretended not to understand him. 'You make me tremble,' said I, 'when you talk of destroying; I thought our object had been only to repair.'

'Aye,' said he, 'but reparation often occasions ruin: when you attack an old wall, you cannot be assured that it will not crumble under the hammer; and the edifice here is really so decayed, that I should not be surprised if it were necessary to demolish it from top to bottom.' 'From top to bottom!' exclaimed I. 'Why not?' replied Chamfort, 'and build it anew, upon a less Gothic and more regular plan. Would it, for instance, be so great an evil, though there were fewer stories, and though all were on one floor? Would

you be in despair though you no longer heard of eminence, of highness, of titles, of heraldry, of nobles, of plebeians, of high and low clergy?' I observed, 'that equality had always been the chimera of republics, and the lure which ambition presented to vanity. But this levelling system is particularly impossible in a vast monarchy; and it appears to me,' added I, 'that in attempting to abolish every thing, you go farther than the nation intends and requires.' 'Very good,' replied he, 'do the nation know what they wish? We will make them wish and say what they never thought of; and if they hesitate, we will answer as Crispin, in the comedy of the *Legataire*— "It is all owing to your lethargy." The nation is a great flock, which thinks only of feeding, and which the shepherds, with good dogs, may guide at pleasure. After all, we wish to do good to them without their knowledge; for, my friend, neither your old regimen, nor your religious worship, nor your morals, nor all

your antiquated prejudices deserve to be spared. All this can excite only shame and pity in an age such as ours; and those who are forming a new plan, have every reason for wishing to make the ground clear.'

'The ground clear!' urged I, 'but the throne, the altar!'—'Well,' said he, 'the throne and the altar will fall together: they are two arches which rest upon each other; and, whenever one of the two is broken, the other must bend.'

I concealed the impression which his confidence made upon me, and with the view of drawing him farther on, said—'In the enterprize which you announce, the difficulties appear to me to be greater than the resources.'

'Trust me,' said he, 'the difficulties are foreseen, and the resources are calculated.' He then explained himself, and I learned that the calculations of faction rested upon the character of the king, who was so averse to every kind of violence, that he was believed pusillanimous;

upon the actual condition of the clergy, which, he said, contained now only some virtuous men destitute of ability, and some able men degraded and dishonoured by vices; lastly, upon the condition of the high nobility themselves, who were said to be degenerated, and among whom few great characters supported the lustre of a great name. But it was particularly in themselves that the *tiers etat* had reason to place confidence. This order, long worn out with an arbitrary authority, the oppression of which descended to its lowest ramifications, was superior to the other two orders, not only in numbers, but also in union, in courage, and in a daring determination to brave every thing. 'In short,' said Chamfort, 'you see this impatience and indignation, which has long been brooding, confirmed into a storm, and that storm ready to burst; confederation and insurrection everywhere declared, and, upon the signal being given by the province of Dauphiny, the whole kingdom ready to answer with ac-

clamation, that they are determined to be free; you see the provinces linked together, a correspondence established between them; while from Paris, as from their common centre, the republican spirit diffuses far and wide its warmth and lustre. Such is the state of things—are these castles in the air?'

I allowed, that in speculation, all this was very fine; but, I added, that the best part of the nation would not go beyond the bounds of a desirable reform, nor would allow any breach to be made in the laws of their country, and in the fundamental principles of the monarchy.

He admitted, that at their fire-sides, and in their workshops, many of these domestic citizens might, perhaps, think there was too much boldness in plans which threatened to interrupt their repose and enjoyment. 'But their disapprobation,' said he, 'will be timid and silent, and we can easily overawe them by that determined class, who think that in a change they have nothing to

lose and every thing to gain. We have the most powerful instruments for raising commotions,—famine, money, alarming reports, and the delirium of rage and fear with which men's minds can be struck. You have heard the citizens talk only of elegant speakers. Know, that all our assembly orators are nothing in comparison of the Demostheneses, at half-a-crown a-head, who get up in the taverns, the public places, in the gardens, and on the quays, and tell of ravages, of fires, of villages plundered and deluged with blood, of plots for besieging and starving Paris. Now these are what I call eloquent men. Above all things money, and the hope of pillage, are omnipotent among the populace. We have just made the attempt in the suburb of Saint Anthony; and you cannot believe how little it has cost the duke of Orleans to make them plunder the manufactory of honest Reveillon, who gave subsistence to a hundred families of this very people. Mirabeau humorously maintains,

that with a thousand louis one may make a very nice sedition.'

'So,' said I, 'your experiments are crimes, and your militia consists of robbers?'—'It must be so,' replied he coolly. 'What would you make of all this people if they were muzzled with your principles of honesty and justice? Virtuous men are weak, timid, and careful of themselves; knaves only are determined. The best thing for the people in a revolution, is to have no morality. How is it possible to resist men to whom all means are good? Mirabeau is in the right; there is not one of our old virtues which can be of any use to us: the people have no occasion for any, at least of the same stamp. The great principle is, that every thing necessary, every thing useful to the revolution, is just.'

'Such,' said I, 'is, perhaps, the principle of the duke of Orleans; for it appears to me, that when the people rise he must be their leader, and I own to you I have no very high opinion of his

courage.' 'You are in the right,' said he, 'and Mirabeau, who knows him well, said, that to reckon upon him would be building upon clay. But he has shewn a popular disposition, he bears a commanding name, he has millions to spend; he detests the king, and the queen still more; and if he is deficient in courage, it will be found for him; intrepid leaders will be procured among the people themselves, especially when they have once appeared in rebellion, and view themselves as criminals; for they cannot draw back when no retreat is left but the scaffold. Fear, without hope of safety, is to the people a sure source of courage. Our force will be immense, if we can involve an immense number in the guilt of conspiracy. But,' continued he, 'I see that my hopes make you melancholy: you do not wish a liberty which will cost a great deal of money and blood. Would you have us make revolutions with rose-water?'

Such was the end of the conversation,

and we separated; he, doubtless, full of contempt for my silly scruples, and I not at all satisfied with his daring immorality. The poor man afterwards punished himself by putting an end to his own life when he became sensible of his errors.

I communicated this conversation to the Abbé Maury that very evening. 'It is but too true,' said he, 'that they are little mistaken in their speculations, and that the faction have chosen the time when they will find fewest obstacles. I have watched the two parties. My resolution is formed to perish upon the breach; but I do not the less feel a sad assurance that they will take the place by storm, and that it will be given up to plunder.'

'If so,' said I, 'what madness is it then in the clergy and nobility to allow the king to engage in this war?'—'What would you have them do?'—'What is done during a fire; I wish them to assist in extinguishing it; to supply the *deficit* by becoming bound for

the public debt; to set the vessel of the nation afloat; in short, to withdraw the king from amid the rocks upon which they have themselves driven him; and, whatever it may cost, to prevail upon the king to send back the states-general before they are assembled. I wish them to be informed that they are undone if the states assemble, and that there is not a moment to lose in order to dissipate the storm that is about to fall upon them.' Maury made objections, but I would listen to none. 'Well,' said he, 'since you require it I will take this step; but I shall not be listened to.'

Unfortunately he addressed himself to the Bishop D. an empty head, who treated my information as chimerical. He replied, that things were not so bad as supposed; and that the clergy, with a sword in one hand and a crucifix in the other, would defend their rights.

Released from my deputation from the electoral assembly, I went to my

country-house, in search of the repose which I so much needed; and thereby lost a new society which was forming at my house: it consisted of men, with whom I should have been happy to meet in more peaceful times. There was the Abbé dePerigord, newly created bishop of Autun; the Count de Narbonne, and the Marquis de la Fayette. I had seen them in the world, as free from intrigues and cares as myself. The character of the first was engaging, mild, and judicious; the second had a gay, lively, and brilliant wit; the last had a cordiality which was extremely graceful and captivating. The society of all the three was most agreeable:

But in their meetings at my house I saw their humour darkened by a shade of politics; and some hints which they dropped, led me to suspect causes for this alteration which did not suit with my principles. They perceived, as well as myself, that my house was no longer a proper rendezvous for their communica-

tions and their conferences. We were separated by my retreat.

On the days of the week when I went to the academy I slept at Paris, and I very often spent the evenings with M. Necker. Finding myself there in company with the ministers, I spoke to them openly of what I had seen and learned. They appeared quite astonished, like men who did not know where to turn themselves. What was going on at Versailles had undeceived M. Necker, and I now saw him in consternation. He invited me to dine with him, along with the principal deputies of the commons, and the cold air with which they received his attentions, led me to suppose that they wished to have him for their steward, but not for their guide.

M. de Montmorin, whom I urged to prevail upon the king to withdraw into one of his strong places, and to the head of his armies, objected the want of money, bankruptcy, civil war.

'Then,' continued he, 'you think

the danger very urgent, that you would have such speedy recourse to these extremities?' 'I think it so urgent,' said I, 'that a month hence I would no longer be answerable for the king's liberty, for his head, or for yours.' Alas! Chamfort had made me a prophet. But I was not listened to, or rather I was listened to by a weak minister, who was not listened to himself.

Meanwhile, the deputies from the three orders had come to Versailles, nearly in the number prescribed: three hundred of the order of the clergy, three hundred of the order of the nobility, and six hundred of the order of the *tiers etat*, including such of the Parisian deputies as did not arrive for some days after.

The assembly was opened on the 5th of May. Never had the nation been so fully represented, never had such important interests been entrusted to its representatives; never too had so much talent and information been united in forwarding the great work of the public

good: never, in short, had a better or juster king presented himself to promote it. What happiness has been destroyed by a blind system of revolution.

The king, in all the pomp of majesty, attended by the queen, and the two royal brothers, by the princes of the blood, by the peers of the kingdom, by the officers of the crown, by the keeper of the seals, and by the minister of finance, entered the hall of the assembled states.

He appeared with simple dignity, equally free from pride and timidity, and bore in his countenance that character of goodness which was in his heart. He was sweetly affected by that sentiment with which the view of deputies from a faithful nation tends naturally to inspire their king.

Nothing could be more genuine than the look, the simple and feeling tone coming from the heart, with which he pronounced the discourse which I will now transcribe.

'Gentlemen, the day to which my heart has long looked forward is at last arrived, and I see myself surrounded by the representatives of a nation which I am proud of commanding. A long interval had elapsed since the last meeting of the states-general; and though the calling of these assemblies seemed to have fallen into disuse, I made no hesitation in restoring a practice, from which the kingdom might derive new strength, and which may open to the nation a new source of happiness.

'The national debt, which was already immense at my accession to the throne, has increased under my reign: this has been occasioned by an expensive though honourable war; the increase of taxes has been the necessary consequence, and has rendered their unequal division more sensible. A general restlessness, an immoderate desire of innovation, have taken possession of men's minds, and would, in the end, lead their opinions totally astray, did we not hasten to fix them by

an union of sound and moderate judgments. In this assurance, gentlemen, I have called you together, and I see, with sensible pleasure, that my confidence has been already justified by the disposition which the two higher orders have shewn to renounce their pecuniary interests. The hope which I have entertained of seeing all ranks unanimously concur with me in consulting the general good of the state, will not be deceived.

'I have already directed considerable retrenchments to be made in the expenditure. I shall be happy to receive any suggestions which you may make upon this subject. But, notwithstanding the resources which may be offered by the most rigid economy, I am afraid, gentlemen, it will be impossible to relieve my subjects so speedily as I could desire.

'I will cause the exact situation of the finances to be laid before you; and I am already confident that, when you have examined it, you will propose the most

effectual means for establishing a permanent order, and for confirming public credit. You will diligently employ yourselves in this great and salutary operation, which will secure at once the internal happiness of the kingdom, and its respect among foreign nations.

'Men's minds are in a state of agitation; but an assembly of national representatives will, doubtless, listen only to the counsels of wisdom and prudence. You yourselves, gentlemen, must have been sensible that it has been overlooked on several recent occasions. But the ruling spirit of your determinations will correspond with the true sentiments of a generous nation, whose distinguishing character has always been the love of its kings. I shall banish every other recollection.

'I know the authority and the power of a just king, surrounded by a faithful people, who have at all times been attached to the principles of monarchy. They have formed the glory and the

ornament of France; it is my duty to be its support, and this duty I will always fulfil. But you may, with confidence, expect from me every thing which can be inspired by the most tender interest in the public welfare, or which can be demanded from a sovereign who is the first friend of his people.

'Gentlemen, may a happy union reign in this assembly, and may this become ever memorable as the era of national prosperity and happiness; it is the desire of my heart; it is the most ardent of my wishes: in short, it is the reward which I expect from the uprightness of my intentions and the love of my people.'

These words of the king produced the most favourable impression on the assembly.

The keeper of the seals, according to custom, explained the intentions of the king; he observed, that anciently the military service being at the expence of the nobility, and the subsistence of wi-

dows, of orphans, and the poor, being drawn from the property of the clergy, this kind of contribution absolved them towards the state; but that now, when the clergy were possessed of considerable wealth, and when the nobility obtained honourable and pecuniary rewards, the possessions of these two orders ought to be subjected to the common rule. Among the subjects upon which the assembly should fix its attention, he mentioned the useful changes which might be required in civil legislation and in criminal procedure; and while he acknowledged the necessity of rendering the administration of justice easier, of correcting its abuses, of limiting its expence, of putting a stop to those endless discussions by which families were ruined, and of enabling the accused to be brought speedily to trial, he paid a tacit homage to the principles of Lamoignon.

Lastly, by the king's express order the director-general of the finances having

risen, laid open the situation in which they stood; and, without concealing the evil, pointed out the remedies. He threw an encouraging light over this object, which, in the shade, appeared so terrible, and with the most afflicting statements mingled the consolations of a courageous hope. He shewed that the object which was most urgent and difficult, the establishment of equality between the revenue and expenditure, did not require even the aid of a new tax; that this deficiency would be supplied by mere reductions and moderate savings. As for the resources which remained for the wants of the present year, for the extraordinary expences of the two following, for successively paying off the old debts, for diminishing the amount of anticipations; in short, for discharging some urgent debts, whose payment might be immediately required: he pointed them out in the gradual extinction of life annuities, in the produce of savings and new improve-

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ments, in the increase which would arise from the more equal imposition and more regular levy of the subsidies. Lastly, thinking himself sure that time and national credit would form the only lawful means of lightening the public burdens, he wished no others to be resorted to, and rejected as unworthy of the royal and national magnanimity, every violation of their engagements. 'Let greater precaution,' said he, 'be taken for the future; this is the king's desire and wish. But at so solemn an era, when the nation is called by their sovereign to assemble round him, not for a moment, but for ever—at an era when this nation is called to join, in some degree, in the thoughts and wishes of their king, they will doubtless second, with the greatest eagerness, those sentiments of honour and fidelity of which he is full. This protection granted to the national creditors, this long and constant fidelity will one day, gentlemen, be a noble monument of the moral character

of his majesty; for the king, had he chosen to withdraw it, would have stood in need of no aid; and this, perhaps, is the first advice which modern Machiavels would have been sure to give.'

In addition to these maxims of justice and probity, Necker added the great interest of political power, which rested upon these principles; and employed the same eloquence in pleading the cause of the annuitants, as in pleading that of the national creditors. His honesty was applauded.

But when talking of certain conditional mandates, in which the engagements to be taken with regard to the finances were to be considered as a secondary object, which ought to be preceded by all the concessions and all the assurances which the nation should demand, the minister observed that the embarrassments of the finances were embarrassments of the public; that the expences of the state concerned the nation no less than the monarch;

that upon them depended its security, its repose, its defence, all the advantages of its public existence; and that the obligation which they imposed was too absolute to admit of being rendered conditional; lastly, when even on the supposition that the king had more interest than the nation in the restoration of order and credit, and in the discharge of the public debt, Necker dared to say to the deputies—'Know, gentlemen (and it is proper that you should observe this, in order that you may love the more our august monarch), know it is not to the absolute necessity of a supply of money that the states-general are indebted for the precious advantage of being assembled by his majesty:' and when he shewed them, by stating one article after another, that the king, without committing any injustice, and by mere retrenchments which lay in his own power, might have had in his hands most of the resources for supplying the wants of the state and for filling up the *deficit*, those persons who, in pursuance of their system of dominion

wished to subject the king to the law of necessity, were offended that his minister should shew a wish to keep him free. They had been heard to say, that the nation ought to stone the man who should teach the king no longer to stand in need of new aid.

Necker, it is true, wished to convince the assembly that they had no right to refuse their assistance; but, while he made the king support the dignity of his crown, he left the nation in possession of every means of restraining his lawful authority within the bounds of equity.

And really, when by a common agreement between the monarch and the people, the expenditure was fixed, the taxes agreed to, the ministers accountable, the accounts of receipt and expenditure published and vouched before the eye of the nation; when the abuses, in short, were reformed, and the administration subjected to the rules of the strictest economy; after all this what did they wish

more? And if the equal imposition of taxes was agreed upon, if fixed periods were appointed for the renewal of the states-general, if the press was as free as it ought to be, if the *lettres-de-cachet* were abolished, or entrusted to the wisdom of a tribunal; if liberty, the security of person and property, the equality of all the citizens in the eye of the law was rendered inviolable; if all these benefits were not only offered, but secured to the nation, what was wanting to the unheard of success of this first assembly? Nothing, but that character of independence and dominion, which the fanatical partisans of an absolute and despotic democracy wished that their decrees should possess.

'When the proper time shall come,' said M. Necker to them, 'his majesty will form a just estimate of the character of your deliberations, and if it be such as he hopes, and as he has a right to expect, if, in short, it be such as the soundest part of the nation wishes, and de-

mands, the king will second your inclinations; he will make it his glory to crown them; and the spirit of the best of princes being mingled, if I may so say, with the spirit which will inspire the most faithful of nations, the greatest benefit, the most solid power, will be seen to arise from this union.'

This expression of an authority, which retained in its own hands the power of examination and free consent, was what wounded the pride of the democratical party. They were jealous of seeing the sovereign choose to do, of his own accord, what they meant to command, and accused Necker of investing despotism with the forms of beneficence. They wished a king who should be a king no longer.

Meanwhile, in spite of Mirabeau, and in spite of the violent libel which he published, the discourses of the king and of the minister obtained the approbation of every virtuous mind, both within and without the assembly.

An immense croud of the inhabitants of Paris had thronged to Versailles, in order to enjoy the view of the opening of the states. And when the king, after the meeting, came with the national deputies to the church of Saint Louis, the pomp, the order, the majesty of this august march, the respectful silence of a crowd of spectators arranged on each side, the appearance of the king in the midst of this national court, full of a sweet joy, free from all mistrust, with his family around him happy in the same happiness; all these objects together made so deep and so lively an impression upon men's minds, that involuntary tears flowed from every eye. Hope seemed to precede the walk of the states-general, and prosperity to follow it. But amid this outward show of patriotism and concord, the hollow sound which precedes a storm began already to be heard.

BOOK XV.

THE first contest which arose between the different orders related, as had been foreseen, to the manner in which they should be formed. The first resolution of the *tiers etat* was, never to deliberate in separate chambers; while the first resolution of the nobility and clergy was, never to admit of individual suffrage: resolutions which would have broke up at once the assembly of the states, if each of the parties had continued immoveable. But the party of the higher orders, which was already too weak, was rendered still weaker by the imprudent ground which they took. The *tiers etat*, with the view of engaging them to deliberate in com-

mon, began with demanding a scrutiny of the commissions; and they were evidently right in wishing that this examination should be made together and in common: for it was surely proper that they should recognize each other. By shewing each other the authorities upon which they acted, they entered into no engagement: for, would not each, after this examination, have been as free as before? The higher orders refused this. Instead of waiting the favourable moment for taking a strong position, they thought it advisable to dispute every inch of ground; and they seriously injured themselves at the very first by taking a false position, which they were unable to maintain.

This conduct of the two first orders was prompted by their knowledge of the characters of many of their own confederates.

A very considerable number of the nobility had their minds inflamed, some by a spirit of liberty and independence—

others, by views and calculations of ambition. These leaned towards the party of the people, among whom they hoped to be honoured, distinguished, and raised to the first employments. Among the clergy a still greater number, and, as I formerly mentioned, the whole mass of parochial clergy were attached to the commons by ties of every kind. A parish priest, if he be virtuous, is the most popular of all men. But a sentiment less laudable, though equally natural, was their aversion, first to the bishops, whose severity they often found vexatious, and then for that middle class of abbés, whom they regarded with envy. This class, they said, was useless, and yet was alone favoured; it was idle, yet proud of its idleness; it disdained the ministerial office, while with the pride of an ostentatious opulence, it insulted the humble mediocrity, and sometimes even the poverty which accompanied the laborious condition of a pastor. This particularly alienated the lower clergy, and drove them towards

an order in which nature had placed them, and which, besides, neglected not to promise them a milder lot.

Now, so long as each should be kept in his own body, under the restraint of example and shame, there was reason to think that he would remain attached to it; but if they once entered into a common deliberation with the *tiers etat*, and saw themselves encircled by the popular party, it was to be feared they might adhere to it; there was a wish to shun this first meeting. But the only means of preventing desertion would have been to render it shameful and dishonourable in the public opinion, by assuming a character of frankness and generosity, which would deprive deserters of every cover for their meanness. Commissioners, for the purpose of conciliation, were named by the three orders; but no effect resulted from their conferences.

A monarch, who took a greater interest in himself than in the state, and who, jealous of his power, saw attempts

making to restrain and subject it, would have allowed the orders to weary themselves out with their disputes, till discord disgusted and dissolved this dangerous assembly. But the king, who was sincerely desirous of the public good, and hoped to engage the orders to unite with him in promoting it, was afraid of nothing so much as seeing them separate; and with the same sincerity which had led him to call them to his aid, he sought the means of bringing about an agreement, urging them out of love for him to give their consent.

The clergy accepted the mediation of the king. The nobility, distrustful of the minister, gave their consent only under restrictions which amounted to a refusal. The *tiers etat* declined accepting the offer of the king, urging that the modifications attached by the nobility to their pretended acquiescence rendered it no longer a conciliatory measure. The clergy felt their weakness; the nobility mistook their courage for strength; the

tiers etat felt their strength, they made use of it, and a bad use.

On the 10th of June they formed an almost unanimous decree to terminate useless delays, and to pass from expectation to action. They made, however, a last attempt, and urged again the clergy and nobility to be present at the scrutiny of the commissions, warning them, that otherwise they would proceed in the absence of the privileged classes. They added, that the commons would lay before the king the motives of this great deliberation.

The name of commons, which the *tiers etat* had assumed, and that of classes, which they gave to the two first orders, shewed that they no longer chose any distinction of ranks between them; so that the nobility and clergy had no longer any middle way to take, or any delay to hope for. They ought either to have united with the *tiers etat*, as they did afterwards, or, after examining the commissions in common, each of the two

orders ought to have withdrawn to its own side, and have constituted itself an integral part of the states-general; they ought themselves to have made the most generous sacrifices to the public good, to have declared their readiness to submit to the most exact equality of taxation, to have acknowledged their obligation to secure the national debt, and to meet the exigencies of the state; to have accounted personal servitude as abolished, and allowed the commutation of all rights which were burdensome to the people. They ought to have improved the lot of the inferior clergy, to have consecrated by law the principles of equality, security of person and property, and religious toleration. They should have professed an inviolable attachment to the fundamental principles of the French monarchy; should have laid at the foot of the throne, and signified to the *tiers etat* their solemn engagements, and should have demanded upon every other subject the right of separate deli-

beration, reserving to the king the inalienable right of granting or refusing his sanction to the decrees of the states. At the same time they ought to have protested against every act in which they were supposed absent; should have declared null all those which should bind them without the concurrence of their votes. These resolutions they ought to have published; and if the behaviour of the commons allowed it, should have cooperated with them; or, if the *tiers etat* declined this, should have retired with the dignity which became men who, of their own accord, had performed their duty. Their conduct, when published through the provinces, would have rendered the ambition of the *tiers etat* odious; the more so, as courageous truth was not yet banished from the pulpit, where it might have been heard. This happy moment was lost.

The nobility formed themselves, but stood on the defensive. The clergy thought they might observe a pretended

neutrality. 'They waited,' said Tolendal, 'till a conqueror should appear, whom they might make their ally.'

Since the decree of the 10th, the commons had been busily employed in examining their commissions. Having completed this operation, and thinking that the work of national restoration ought to be begun without delay by the deputies who were present, a decree was passed, on the 15th of June, for pursuing it without interruption; declaring, however, that if the absent deputies should present themselves during the course of the opening session, the assembly would receive them with joy, and, after examining their commissions, would lose no time in admitting them to a share in their labours. Care was taken to add, that the national representation should be one and indivisible; and that representatives only, legally elected and duly recognized, should be allowed to concur in expressing the national wish.

The object now was to know what

name the assembly should assume. That of National assembly, the most ambitious of all, was preferred (17th June); and those who were of opinion that the commons should not usurp the title of nation, had their names written in a list, which was circulated through Paris: a form of accusation which afterwards gave a formal blow to the freedom of voting.

The second act of the omnipotence which the commons assumed was, to declare null all the contributions which had hitherto existed, and to lay it down as a principle, that even former taxes could not have been lawful, unless they had received, not merely the tacit, but the formal consent of the nation.

From this moment the ministry ought to have put the king on his guard against this usurpation of power. They should have advised him to dissolve this factious assembly, as exceeding the bounds of their functions, and arrogating a power to which they had no title.

But the council, very far from being capable of forming such a resolution, had not even a plan formed for conducting its resistance. I was informed by Malouet, one of the men who has shewn most courage, understanding, and talents, that he one day asked Necker, in presence of two other ministers, if he had formed any plan for defending the throne against the attacks with which it was threatened; and Necker replied, that he had none whatever.

By this time Necker was no longer the minister whom circumstances required. He had engaged the state in difficulties, out of which he had no power to extricate it.

However, he could not conceal from the king that the assembly assumed an exorbitant power; and, with the view of restraining it, on the 20th of the month a royal sitting was proclaimed for the 22d. Till then the halls were ordered to be shut, and the states to suspend their meetings. This was but a weak

mode of preventing the union which was apprehended of a part of the clergy with the commons.

The court and council were full of agitation. The nobility and the higher clergy saw their ruin approaching if the king abandoned them, and they demanded his support. It was resolved, therefore, in council, that the king should go in person and point out to the deputies of the people the limits of their power; should engage them to union in consideration of the national safety, and manifest his own beneficent intention of seconding their efforts.

Much prudence was required in composing this declaration. Two opposite dangers were to be shunned, that of yielding to the commons, and that of revolting them. Necker, to whom this task was entrusted, studied, according to his principles, to temper without weakening the language of authority; to make the king desire nothing which was not just and desirable, and to conciliate what be-

longed to the majesty of the monarch with what seemed due to the dignity of the national representatives. The discourse drawn out by him was, at first, adopted; but, in a council which was held at Marly, during his absence, some alterations were made which were said to be slight, but which he himself told me, were such as to prevent the declaration from having any longer the effect intended.

Whatever the change might have been, which I have not been able to ascertain, it is certain that the speech wanted connection, and was ill suited to its object.

On the 20th, the order of the nobility had obtained an audience from the king, in which their president, the duke de Luxembourg, had said in their name—'Sire, the deputies of the order of the *tiers etat* have boldly attempted to centre in themselves the authority of the states-general. Without waiting for the assembly of the other two orders, and the sanction of your majesty, they have

thought proper to convert their decrees into laws. They have ordered them to be printed and sent into the provinces; they have declared the contributions, as they are now levied, null and illegal. They have agreed to them in the name of the nation, only provisionally and for a limited period; they have, doubtless, thought they might claim the united rights of the king and the three orders. We lay before your majesty our protest against such pretensions.'

The nobility added the strongest assurances of zeal, of fidelity, of courage, of devotion.

'I know,' replied the king, 'the rights attached to my birth; I shall find means to defend them—and to maintain, for the interest of all my subjects, the authority with which I am entrusted, and which I will never allow to be encroached upon. I depend upon your zeal for your country, upon your attachment for my person; and I am confident that your fidelity will lead you to adopt those

schemes of conciliation with which I am occupied for the happiness of my people.'

Both the harangue and the reply supposed measures and resources which ought to have been secured. The court was too forgetful of the maxim, that authority is undone when it is in danger of shewing its weakness.

During the interval that passed previous to the royal sitting, the commons, having no decent place where they could assemble, took the first that offered. It was a tennis-court, rendered famous by the oath which they took, never to separate, and to assemble wherever circumstances might require, till the constitution of the kingdom, and the restoration of order should be established upon solid foundations. The other party were far from being on their guard against these acts of vigour.

The sitting announced for Monday the 22^{d} having been delayed till next day, the assembly removed from the tennis-court to the church of Saint Louis, in

order, doubtless, that the sacredness of the place might give a character of greater importance to what should be there transacted.

Scarcely had they taken their seats when the gates of the sanctuary opened, and the archbishops of Bordeaux and Vienne, and the bishops of Chartres and Rhodez, at the head of a hundred and forty-five deputies from the clergy, came out and advanced into the middle of the assembly. The commons received them with joy, as victims who were led to them; and the populace, with whom the church was filled, seemed desirous by their applause to blind them completely to the fate which awaited them. The body of the commons, swelled by this reinforcement, redoubled their assurance and determination for next day's sitting.

Necker declined accompanying the king. Though I cannot approve, I must explain the motive of so strange a conduct. He had openly maintained in the council, that the union of the three

chambers into one was inevitable; that it could not be delayed without the greatest danger to the state; that it was easy to see how irrevocably determined the commons were not to admit of deliberation by orders, and that the authority of the king would be uselessly committed by an attempt to compel them; that if the same resistance were made by the two first orders, the states must either be held without their concurrence, or must be dissolved; that the one alternative would lead to the ruin of the nobility and the clergy, and the other to that of the kingdom; that in the exhausted state of every resource, the fatal moment was approaching, in which even the payments which were most immediately required, those of the royal treasury, those of the hotel de Ville, even the pay of the troops, the subsistence of Paris, were all about to fail; that the kingdom was threatened with famine, bankruptcy, and, perhaps, with civil war, if the states should dissolve, or should not come to an imme-

diate agreement: and, after having struck the king and the council with these alarming truths, he had made them adopt a declaration, in which he attempted to reconcile the royal dignity with republican pride.

Now it was here particularly that the declaration had been altered. In its present state it supposed incontestable those principles which were most likely to be contested; the king was made to adopt all the wishes of the nobility; he was made to annul or prohibit every thing that was contrary to their wishes. This was supposing him to possess both the actual power, and the firm determination, of instantly dissolving the assembly, in case of their resisting his authority. Now the one was in as tottering a condition as the other. Bankruptcy and civil war were, as it were, two spectres, which struck the king with terror.

Necker having, therefore, learned that his work was altered, and that the royal authority was set in opposition to public

liberty, thought it proper for him to avoid appearing at this sitting, where his presence would have led to the belief that he adhered to what was done in opposition to his advice. From his conduct, some have inferred, that he wished to gain the favour of the people for himself alone; others, that he had given the signal of rebellion; and the most moderate, that, solely occupied with his own reputation, he had sacrificed every thing to private interest. The declaration was read to the assembly in the king's presence; and in it two incoherent characters were easily recognized. It was divided into two parts. In the first, as I have said, the most absolute power was displayed. In the other, as a sequel to these maxims of despotism, which had already been too rigorously applied in the beds of justice, came an affecting statement of the good intentions of the king, and of the measures which he meant to take for securing the prosperity of the kingdom. The king then, after

calling the states-general to join with him in canvassing the great objects of public advantage, proposed that all the laws which he should sanction during the present meeting of the states, should never be changed without the consent of the united orders. With regard to the public force alone which had been established for the protection of public safety, both within and without, he expressly declared his determination to preserve entire, without the least alteration, the management of the army, as well as full authority over military arrangements and discipline, such as the French monarchs had constantly enjoyed.

Had the states chosen to be indebted to the king for a moderate and limited monarchy, the king was willing to bestow it. But they thought it beneath their dignity to receive it from him; and whatever the new constitution might be, which they had not yet considered, they meant it to be their own work, and not a favour from the king. The whole at-

tention of men's minds was, therefore, directed towards that part of the declaration which reminded them of arbitrary power. The mild and feeling language which had been added, was considered as a lure to win them into obedience, and as a vain and feeble palliative of those acts of despotism which the king came to exercise.

The commons were particularly wounded with the following conclusion of the king; when addressing them, he said—

'Gentlemen, you have heard the result of my disposition and my views. They are in conformity with the strong desire which I feel of promoting the public good; and if, in consequence of a fatality which is far from my thoughts, you should abandon me in so noble an enterprize, I alone will make my people happy; I alone will consider myself as their true representative: and knowing, as I do, your instructions—knowing the perfect correspondence which exists be-

tween the general wish of the nation and my beneficent intentions, I shall feel all the confidence which so singular a harmony ought to inspire, and will advance towards the desired object with proper courage and firmness. It is I, from this time, who do every thing for the happiness of my people; and it is, perhaps, rare, that the only ambition of a sovereign should be that of prevailing upon his subjects to listen and accept his benefits.'

This authoritative tone, these words of sovereign, subjects, benefits, appeared offensive to republican ears; and when the king concluded with commanding the three orders to withdraw, each into their chamber, the tacit resolution of the commons was not to obey. The good wishes of the king were thus thrown away, and discord was increased by a sitting which was held with the view of suppressing it.

At the end of the sitting, the commons, in a respectful but gloomy silence,

allowed the order of the nobility to accompany the king, and remained in that hall, which, from this moment, became their own. In vain did the king send an order to them to leave it. Upon that very spot they determined to adhere to their preceding decrees, and this resolution was formed unanimously. It was at the same time resolved, that the persons of the deputies should be inviolable; that none of them, either in the time of the session, or after it, should be prosecuted or arrested by the executive power, on account of what he had said or done in the assembly; by this decree the authors and instigators of such deeds were declared infamous, and traitors towards their country. It was added, that during the session the persons of the deputies should be subject neither to criminal nor civil prosecution. The proposal was made by Mirabeau, who was more interested than any other person in raising a barrier between the laws and himself.

A numerous populace, who were sent from Paris to Versailles, had surrounded the hall of the states during the royal sitting. They still surrounded it, when news came that Necker was going to give in his reignation. This report was well founded.

The king, struck with astonishment at not having seen the minister of finance in his train, and still more surprised at not finding him in the palace at his return, had anxiously inquired of Montmorin if Necker meant to leave him; and Montmorin having given him to understand that he believed so, the king desired him to go and say that he wished to speak to him.

It was at seven in the evening, the time when Necker was shut up alone with the king, that the people deluged the courts and interior of the palace, crying out, that the king was deceived, and that the voice of the people called for M. Necker.

The conversation of the king with his

minister lasted a whole hour. The people waited the issue. At last they saw the king set out for Trianon, without saluting him with that cry of *Vive le roi*, which he so well merited; and the instant after they saw Necker come down stairs and get into his carriage. Then it was that their prayers and blessings were poured upon him. The minister has been reproached with having wished to enjoy his triumph, and there really would have been a degree of insolence had such been his intention; but though Necker might, through the galleries, have returned modestly to his own house without appearing before the people, yet it would be too rigorous, I think, to make a crime of his not having paid the king this respectful attention.

Necker, overwhelmed by the gratitude and applauses of the people, who attended him home, had no sooner arrived there, than he was visited not only by a deputation of the assembly, but by the whole of that body, who, thronging

around him, besought him, if he regarded his country, if he regarded the king himself, and the safety of the state, not to abandon him. This was all a stage-trick, to throw odium upon the royalist party; and the faction were not the less determined to destroy the minister himself, if he should not be devoted to the popular party.

Necker endeavoured to represent to them, that, being left alone, it was no longer in his power to do any good. 'We will assist you,' exclaimed Target, assuming the right of speaking in the name of all, 'and there are no efforts, no sacrifices, which we are not ready to make for that purpose.' 'Sir,' said Mirabeau, with a deceitful frankness, 'I do not love you, but I bow to virtue.'— 'Remain, M. Necker,' exclaimed the croud, 'we beseech you to remain.' The minister, sensibly affected, said— 'Speak for me, M. Target, for I cannot speak myself.' Target then cried, 'Gentlemen, I remain; this is the reply of

M. Necker.' It was afterwards known how deeply the king was affected by this scene; and this, indeed, formed part of the intention of its actors.

There was no hope of breaking the union of the commons, or of conquering their resistance. Every day there arrived from the different cities of the kingdom congratulations, dictated by themselves, upon their courageous firmness. In these addresses it was said, that if snares were set before the national assembly, they had only to look behind, where they would see twenty-five millions of Frenchmen, whose eyes were fixed upon their conduct, silently awaiting their own fate, and that of their posterity. It was not to be expected that a party who had once declared themselves so strongly would go back one step.

The resolution of the other party was far from being so unanimous, or their resistance so firm. Division, as we have seen, had arisen among the clergy. The nobility could not place much greater

reliance upon themselves; sixty deputies of that order had already declared loudly in their chamber against the refusal which had been given to the king's mediation. With regard to the clergy, on the day after the royal sitting a hundred and sixty parish priests had gone into the common hall. Two days after two other bishops, those of Orange and of Autun, had followed. On the same day the humble and mild archbishop of Paris had presented his credentials. Forty-seven of the nobility, among whom were some men of distinction, had joined the commons. The rest of the two first orders could not avoid following this example; and, in the critical situation of affairs, every delay was dangerous. The king, in order to determine them, did what he ought to have done previous to the royal sitting. The letter which he wrote, by saving them the humiliation of yielding to the commons, gave them an opportunity of acquiring the respectable appearance of acting from love to him, and

respect for his will. They yielded to him; and this day (the 27th of June) was distinguished by the union of the three orders in the common hall of the states-general.

This solemn union was made, at first, in a profound silence; but, on its completion, this respectful silence was suddenly succeeded by an explosion of joy, which was communicated to those without.

The people, who were still capable of mild and worthy sentiments, were informed that their triumph was the king's work. Doubly happy to obtain it, and to be indebted for it to him, they thronged towards that palace, to which, some days before, they had gone with such alarm. They made it resound with the sweetest wish of Frenchmen. They asked to see their good king, that they might shew how much they loved him, and might make him a witness of the transports which he inspired.

The king appears on the balcony of

his apartment, accompanied by the queen; and both hear their names resound to heaven. Amid their embraces, delicious tears flow, and the queen, by an emotion with which every heart is affected, strains in her arms the object of her gratitude. Then that populace, which afterwards displayed so much ferocity, but which was still good (I take pleasure in repeating it), seized this instant to reward the queen for her conjugal affection by maternal happiness. They ask to see her son; they ask to see the dauphin. This feeble and precious child, carried in his mother's arms, is presented by maternal love to national tenderness: happy in not living long enough to see how this favour was deceitful and changeable.

'After the good king, the good minister,' then exclaimed the multitude; and, by a common impulse, they flew towards the house of Necker, which they again made resound with vows and blessings.

During the night of this great day

Versailles was illuminated, and presented everywhere only the image of public felicity.

Nothing could be more pleasing than the spectacle of a nation exalted by generous sentiments. But the enthusiasm of the populace is dangerous, even when it is most laudable; for they know no interval between two extremes, and allow themselves to be carried from one to the other by the passion of the moment. They felt then all the value of liberty. But this new liberty, with which they were in a manner intoxicated, was soon to pervert them, by causing to ferment the elements of every vice.

Already, under the specious name of public good, a spirit of licentiousness, of faction, and anarchy, was diffused through the multitude. The independence and the perpetuity of a national assembly, in which the commons should have the mastery, and, by means of this assembly, the sovereignty of the people concentrated in the will of their representatives

under all the characters of the most frightful despotism; a constitution which would convert the kingdom into an armed democracy, under a shade, indeed, of monarchy, but governed in reality by an aristocratical body, periodically elected at the pleasure of the ruling party; such was the project formed by the republican faction. Now they were well aware that obstacles would be found; and they foresaw that in the attacks which they were either to make or to sustain, there would be need of a people intoxicated with liberty and mad with rage. Then it was that I comprehended what Chamfort had foretold of the system which would be adopted by the factious, in order to spread the fury of discord among the lower orders, and to keep them, incessantly, in convulsive movements of fear or of blind audacity.

In addition to the domestic distress arising from the dearness of bread and the dread of wanting it, and to that uneasiness which naturally arose from the

difficulty of bringing in provisions, though this too was exaggerated, the people were besides inflamed by the blackest allegations of conspiracies, said to be formed against them. Terror was struck into them in order to render them terrible, and mistrust became every day more fierce and gloomy.

The robbers known under the name of Marseillais, were called to Paris to be the instruments of the republican faction. These were men habituated to rapine and carnage, thirsting alike for blood and for booty, who mingled among the people, and inspired them with their own ferocity.

The presence of the tribunals was still a restraint upon them, and rendered their guilt less daring. But this feeble barrier seemed every moment likely to be overleaped, and the crowd of vagabonds who mingled with the leaders of faction, and were ready to serve them, increased every day; the harbours, the quays, were covered; the hotel de Ville was invested

witb them: they surrounded the palace, and seemed to insult the inactivity of justice disarmed—twelve thousand were kept uselessly employed in digging the hill of Montmartre, for which they were paid a livre a-day. They had been posted as a rear guard, to be brought forward when necessary. At night a misled and threatening multitude assembled at the *palais-royal*. Its porticos, its gardens were filled. A hundred groupes were formed to listen to calumnious accusations and inflammatory motions.—The most furious declaimers were best listened to. Men's minds were fed with a thousand pretended atrocities, which were invented, and circulated. There it was that furious declamations were made against the royal authority, which was represented as the cause of the dearness of corn and of the national poverty. There it was that victims, devoted to death, were marked out to the votaries of sedition, intoxicated with foolish hopes, or troubled with gloomy fears. No

public men, not even the most upright and most respectable, could depend upon being spared. Thence issued in crouds, men either themselves terrified, or bribed to sow alarm and sedition throughout Paris.

But, improbable as it may seem, at Versailles itself a class of men, who depended upon the court for their whole rank and fortune, shewed themselves most infatuated with republican maxims.

These men, whilst part of the clergy were still deliberating upon the union of orders, had been seen insulting such of the priests as they had observed to be hostile to this measure, and urged by false accusations, had attacked the worthy archbishop of Paris, had thrown stones at him, and had pursued him into his carriage; the French guards, far from restraining the mutineers, had been observed to encourage them by signs of intelligence; and it was well known, that in Paris these soldiers, caressed in the

palais-royal and treated in the coffee-houses, were accustomed to call themselves the friends of the people. It was natural, therefore, that the king, though he might have no anxiety about himself, should wish the people, both in Paris and at Versailles, to be subjected to their accustomed police, to return to order, and peaceably give themselves up to labour.

The king might conceive that a faction constantly present and threatening, would not allow the national assembly to carry on their deliberations with that degree of freedom which was indispensable; that personal security was the foundation of this liberty; that the security ought to be equally inviolable to all; and that the sovereign ought to be its guardian. He might think that the hall of assembly, open like a theatre, ought not to be a focus of sedition. It appeared, therefore, at once just and wise to employ a respectful guard in protecting the freedom of opinion; and personal security.

At the same time, he ordered the soldiers of the French guards, who were then wandering throughout Paris, to be again subjected to discipline, and punished if they withdrew from it.

But neither the people nor their movers would submit to any restraint. The guard which surrounded the hall was forced; and the assembly sent a deputation to the king, declaring that the states, assembled free, could not act freely in the midst of the guards by which they were surrounded. The guard was taken off; and it became necessary to leave the hall open to the concourse of the public.

The king was sensible that the disorder would continue to increase if the people were left exempt from all apprehensions; that it would then be no longer possible to appease them unless by yielding; that while he used indulgence towards the votaries of faction, he ought, at least, to shew them that it was in his power to be rigorous; and that, as he was not sure of being

obeyed by the French guards, it was time to bring forward some troops on which he could depend. He sent for them accordingly, but in a very small number at first, and most sincerely with the sole intention of protecting public order, and the tranquillity of the citizens. Nobody doubted this: but that very tranquillity and order would give a mortal blow to the revolution which they aimed at producing.

The king had been heard replying to the nobility, that he knew the rights attached to his birth, and how to maintain them. He had said to the states-general, that none of their plans, none of their deliberations, could have the authority of a law without his special approbation, and that all the orders of the state might trust to his impartial equity. Now, before the king brought forward this system of authority, and of protecting power, in opposition to a popular faction, which regarded itself as the sole and supreme legislative body, and as the depository of

the national will; before holding this language he ought to have had arms in his hands; and it was necessary that he should have had it in his power, if circumstances should require it, to act as he had spoken—as a good king, but as a real monarch. This was precisely what the factious and revolutionary party would not endure. Their strength resided in that mass of people who blindly follow those that declare in their favour; and if Versailles were guarded, if Paris were calm, or kept in order by troops of the line, the votaries of faction would be left without resource and without hope.

They did not yet excite the people to crimes, nor were they insensible of the dangers of anarchy. But it was necessary to intimidate the king and the party of good men, though it should cost at first some mischief, and even some innocent blood; republican freedom was of such high value, that, to obtain it, small sacrifices might be allowed. Such were the politics and morals

of the greater number, and these were the most moderate; others thought every thing lawful which could be of service to them; and Mirabeau, at their head, loudly professed, under the title of modern virtue, a contempt for the most sacred rights and duties.

It was necessary, they said, to nourish the flame of patriotism; and the liberty, which, in order to attain it, was granted to the press, gave rise every day to calumnious libels, which devoted to public hatred and vengeance every one who dared to dispute the power of universal oppression which the people assumed. If a nobleman defended, with any degree of warmth, the cause of the nobles; if a churchman, with any degree of eloquence, pleaded the cause of the clergy, they were instantly accused, in these writings, as traitors to their country. Even in the *tiers etat*, a moderate opinion was accounted meanness, and exposed its author to suspicion. Thus, while the commons surrounded the two

first orders with restraint and violence, they pretended to be repelling restraint and violence from themselves. Every thing which could rouse and enrage the people was allowed and provoked; every thing which could restrain or suppress their movements gave birth to the warmest remonstrances, even in the states. The name of liberty was given to the right of extinguishing all liberty. The meaning of these remonstrances was not doubtful. 'We wish, by means of the people, to have every thing in our power, and to allow nothing to be done without us.'

But, when the king assembled the states-general, did he mean to form a democracy, and to bestow on the commons the threatening despotism which they pretended to exercise? 'What, sire,' said the oppressed orders to him, 'what has become of that safety which you guaranteed to us? What has become of that equality which the commons demanded? Can a shadow of it

be retained by two orders who would hear themselves denounced, and devoted to popular fury, if they did not consent, without remonstrance, to whatever the *tiers etat* should desire?' Doubtless this hall of the national assembly ought not to have been surrounded by a military guard. But neither ought it to have been surrounded by bands of ruffians, ready to stone us. That peaceful guard, which was said to be so injurious to the assembly of the states, was placed there only to secure the tranquillity of debate and the freedom of voting. Did they wish all restraint to be banished? then, at the same time that the troops were removed, they should have removed also that populace who came into the very assembly encouraging their partizans, marking out their victims and rendering the formidable trial of the *appel nominal*, terrible to the weak.

The orators of the people extolled their goodness, their natural justice; and this praise was undoubtedly due to

a select class of citizens. But, looking beneath this class, did they not see those robbers who, in Paris, had not long ago plundered the house of a peaceful and good citizen? those who spread calumny and revolt through the royal palace? those who at Versailles had attempted to stone a charitable and pious archbishop? those who rescued from punishment a son, the murderer of his father? those who afterwards committed so many atrocities in Paris, at the gates of the hotel de Ville, and even in the royal palace at Versailles? and those who have applauded after exciting them, and have rejoiced when they saw the heads of citizens inhumanly massacred, carried about at the end of pikes.

Then, said the two orders who called out for the common security, then indeed it was a cruel mockery thus to confound the people who ought to be restrained, with those who ought to be protected. By a monstrous abuse of words, the populace were represented as

the people, and this people as the nation, who were declared to be sovereign.

At Paris the commons demanded a guard of citizens. But, till it was organized, what could be alarming in the small number of regular troops which the king had sent for? Since their arrival every thing was tranquil. But this military police was not relished by the commons: their emissaries never ceased to agitate the *palais-royal*, the infamous haunt of guilt—they invited thither the guards, and kept them all night. The duke de Chatelet, their colonel, could not overlook this; he caused two of these vagabond soldiers to be taken up at an undue hour; and they were conducted to the prison of the Abbaye. This was the signal of an insurrection. The most common act of military authority was treated as an offence against liberty; and, in less than an hour, the prison of the two soldiers, who were called friends of the people, was besieged by twenty thousand men. The jailors

having attempted to resist, they took hatchets and levers, broke open the doors, and allowed all the prisoners, even the criminals, to escape during the night.

Next day, at the opening of the national assembly, the deputies of this mutinous crowd arrived at Versailles. In their address, which was put into the hands of the president, it was said, that these two unhappy victims of despotism had been delivered from their chains; that they had been led back amid the sound of acclamation to the *palais-royal*, where they were under the guard of the people, who had become responsible for them. 'We expect your reply,' said they, 'to restore tranquillity to our fellow-citizens, and liberty to our brethren.'

The reply of the president was, that the assembly, while they besought the king to pardon the offenders, would set an example of the respect due to the royal authority,

and that they besought the inhabitants of Paris immediately to return to order. This reply, though feeble, was at least sincere, and conformable to the wish of the commons; for the assembly did not know that the populace were set in motion by the most distinguished and infamous ruffians, and that this fury, with which they were inspired, was for the purpose of making the court dread a revolt. The assembly did not know the springs by which they themselves were moved: the people were raised in their name, and yet it was the people who ruled over them. Such was the mechanism of the revolution.

The king was therefore besought, in the name of the assembly, to have the goodness to employ, for the restoration of order, those infallible means of clemency and kindness which were so natural to his heart. He consented without difficulty: but, before indulging in the exercise of mercy, he wished order to be re-established, which it was not in any respect.

The people neither re-committed the two soldiers to their prison, nor discontinued their own nocturnal assemblages; but, on the contrary, redoubled their tumult and violence, demanded the promise of the king in a tone which would brook no delay, and discipline and the royal authority were under the necessity of bending to their will.

Then it was that the resolutions of the council seemed to assume some degree of energy; but weakness never shakes off its character but by halves, and after a trembling and fruitless effort, becomes more timid than ever.

The adventure of the guard soldiers, the spirit of insubordination with which the populace inspired them, the daring tone which this populace had assumed, their manner of commanding while they seemed to entreat, their fiery impatience to obtain what they asked, and the merit which they claimed for becoming quiet after they had been obeyed; in short, that character of imperious and threat-

ening liberty which they constantly displayed, had been eagerly laid hold of in the council, to make the king understand that the greatest of evils, both for the state and for himself, would be to allow the authority which was in his hands to be despised, which would infallibly be the case, if it was seen without arms; that the appearance of weakness had already emboldened them to attack it, and that a formidable force alone could secure for it respect and obedience; that the multitude must either tremble themselves, or make others tremble; that it was not by laws alone that states, especially such vast states, were governed; that justice had need of the sword and the buckler; that wisdom and equity consisted in knowing how to use force without ever abusing it; that it was thus good kings were distinguished from the weak or tyrannical. It were, doubtless, to be wished, that the meeting of the states could have passed in perfect security, without being surround-

ed by any military retinue. It was so in countries where the people chose to rely upon the wisdom and fidelity of their representatives; it would be the same in France after order and tranquillity were re-established; but so long as the populace, and the most seditious and turbulent of the populace, should come and interrupt the deliberations of the states-general with insults and threats, the public force had a right to arm in order to restrain them.

'They suppose, sire,' added those who demanded the use of coercive authority, 'they suppose it will be as easy to quiet the lower orders as it is to rouse them; after they have made them subservient to the design of a general subversion of the kingdom, they will wish again to confine the tiger in his cage, and to make him forget how terrible he can be when he chooses; but it will be too late; the wild beast will have learned his strength, and the weakness of his chains. Above all, how dreadful will he be if he

has tasted blood. He will long, perhaps, make those tremble who have dared to unloose him. Let this people then be informed that justice is still in your hands, and that it is still to be feared.

'From the beginning of your reign, sire, you have been made to reduce and to weaken your military establishment; and, flattering yourself that you had to reign only over a virtuous and faithful people, in the uprightness of your heart, you consented to this fatal reduction. But the discipline and obedience of your armies are not destroyed, and you have still sufficient forces remaining to oppose the daring attempts of the votaries of faction. To use these forces against the laws would be despotism; but when employed in maintaining order and law, they are the proper retinue of lawful authority, the safeguard of the state, and the support of royalty.

'If, sire, all the members of the national assembly were equally attached as you to the public good, they would

unite in demanding, that around the sanctuary of legislation there should be placed an impenetrable, and even an inaccessible barrier, for the troops on one side, and for the people on the other. Then all would be on an equal footing. But, no; they wish the troops to be removed, only that full licence and impunity may be allowed to the populace. It is feared that they may be cooled or intimidated; the votaries of faction wish them to dare every thing, and to have nothing to fear; through them they wish to reign. Have we not seen how, from the centre to the extremities of the kingdom, this name of liberty, which, with the populace, means only licentiousness, has resounded like a signal of insurrection and anarchy. The police among the populace, discipline in the armies, order and law in every department, have been branded as remnants of slavery. Independence, and contempt for every kind of authority, appear on the very face of the

kingdom; and upon the ruins of the monarchy, with its rubbish, they boast of erecting a democratical empire. A vile collection of vagabonds, without morals, profession, or designation of any kind, are called the sovereign people. But the nation desires and demands that the constitution of the kingdom should be established upon a firm foundation, and the object is to render it at once firmer and more regular. It is in this employment, sire, that the states are bound to unite with you. By the ancient and venerable constitution of our monarchy, you are king; the supreme authority, the executive power, has been placed in your hands; your ancestors, on whom the nation bestowed it, have transmitted it to you as an inheritance. The nation neither wishes, nor intends, to depose its king. And what would a monarch be, if he were not the protector of the rights and liberties of all.

'Be the protector, sire, of all orders,

and allow none to be oppressed. Protect the states themselves, and especially protect those honest citizens, those peaceful labourers in the city and country, who are threatened at their firesides by an idle and vagrant populace, whom, they dread with reason, it will soon be too late to place under the restraint of laws. No, sire, we speak to you no longer in the name of the clergy and nobility, but in the name of that virtuous people whose father you are; we beseech you not to abandon them to the most cruel of tyrannies, to that of the populace and their perfidious instigators.'

The king was thus persuaded, that by displaying a military power before the eyes of the people, he would only restrain one force by another, and would leave public liberty between them, protected and free from danger.

BOOK XVI.

The king, therefore, ordered troops to advance; but those who prompted him to this vigorous resolution ought to have foreseen its consequences, to have calculated their own strength, and the resistance they would meet with, and to have determined previously the position they should assume upon every event. Nothing was calculated, nothing was provided for; no means were even taken to secure the troops from being corrupted by the Parisian populace. No arrangement was made to shelter the king and royal family from insult in case of revolt; and in the suburbs of Paris the only commanding position, the Bastile, was

neither supplied with a sufficient garrison, nor with provisions to support the few soldiers whom it contained. Lastly, the very subsistence of the troops who were assembled, was so completely neglected, that their bread was made only of spoiled corn, while the women of the populace came and offered them some that was excellent, with plenty of wine and butcher meat, not to mention their other means of corruption.

While the court and council were sunk in this kind of stupor, the opposite party held a steady, systematic, and progressive conduct, advancing from post to post towards dominion, without ever losing a moment, or falling back one step. Being determined, therefore, that they would suffer no assemblage of troops to be formed, either around Versailles or Paris, they prepared an address to the king on the 8th of July 1789. It was the work of Mirabeau, the leading orator of the commons, a man endowed by nature with all the talents of a tribune of the people;

of an ardent character, but as pliant in his conduct as fiery in his passions; skilful in foreseeing the turns of public opinion, and that he might appear to conduct, careful to anticipate it. He was cowardly, but headstrong, with all the intrepidity of impudence. He was dissolute to the greatest degree, and boasted of being so; from his youth he had been dishonoured by the most shameful vices, but he set no value upon honour. He thought himself assured that a dangerous man could not be despised, even though he should have rendered himself contemptible, and was resolved to dispense with the esteem attached to moral character, provided he obtained that which is extorted by great talents when they become formidable.

The following is the address which he proposed to send to the king; a masterpiece of artful and treacherous eloquence, which, after being applauded, as might naturally be expected, was adopted with acclamation on the 6th of July.

Sire, you have invited the national assembly to express to you their confidence; this was anticipating the dearest of their wishes. We are now to declare to your majesty the deep alarm which has seized us. Were we aimed at, had we the weakness to fear for ourselves, your goodness would still deign to assure us of safety; and, even while you blamed the doubt we had expressed of your intentions, you would remove the cause, you would leave us in no uncertainty relative to the situation of the national assembly.

'But, sire, we do not implore your protection; this would be offending your justice. We have conceived apprehensions, which we will venture to say are founded upon the purest patriotism, upon the interest of our constituents, upon the public tranquillity, upon the happiness of that beloved monarch, who, while he smooths to us the path of happiness, fully deserves that he should meet with

no obstacle in his own.' (Detestable hypocrite.)

'The emotions of your heart, sire, are the true safety of Frenchmen. When troops advance from all quarters, when camps are formed around us, when the capital is invested, we ask with astonishment, Has the king doubted the fidelity of his people? Could he have doubted it, would he not have poured his paternal sorrows into our bosom? What is the meaning of these threatening appearances? Where are the enemies of the state, and of the king, who are to be subdued? Where are the conspirators who must be reduced to obedience? The unanimous reply of the capital, and throughout the whole extent of the kingdom is; we love our king; we bless heaven for having bestowed his love upon us.

'Sire, your majesty's regard to the good of your people can be surprised only under the pretence of public advantage. If those who gave our king this advice had so much

confidence in their own principles as to state them before us, that moment would lead to the nobles' triumph of truth.

'The state has nothing to fear, except the bad principles which dare to beset the throne itself, and do not respect the crown of the most pure and virtuous of princes. And what method do they take, Sire, to make you doubt the attachment and love of your subjects?

'Have you lavished their blood? Are you cruel, implacable? Have you abused justice? Do the people impute their misfortunes to you? Do they name you as the author of their calamities? Was it possible for our enemies to say that the people are impatient under your yoke? No, no; they have not done so. Their calumny at least is not absurd: they seek to throw a shade of probability over its atrocities.

'Your majesty has had a late opportunity of seeing all the power which you possess over your people. Subordination has been established in the disturbed ca-

pital; the prisoners who were set at liberty by the people have voluntarily resumed their chains; and public order, which, if force had been employed, might perhaps have cost torrents of blood, has been restored by a word of your mouth; but this word was a word of peace; it was the expression of your heart; and your subjects place their glory in never resisting it. How noble is it to exercise this empire; it is the empire of Louis IX, of Louis XII, and of Henry IV, and the only one which is worthy of you. We should deceive you, sire, if, forced by circumstances, we did not add, that this is the only empire which, in France, it is now possible to exercise. France will not suffer the best of kings to be abused, and led astray by sinister paths from the noble plan which he himself has traced. You call upon us to unite with you in fixing the constitution, and in effecting the regeneration of the kingdom. The national assembly has solemnly declared that your wishes

shall be fulfilled, that your promises shall not be vain, that snares, difficulties, and terror, shall not retard their progress, nor damp their courage.

'Where, then, is the danger of troops, will our enemies affect to say, and what is the meaning of their complaints, since nothing can discourage them? The danger, Sire, is urgent and universal; it is beyond all the calculations of human prudence.

[illegible] the most cruel anguish—how will they see the remnant of their subsistence disputed by a crowd of threatening soldiers? The presence of the troops will lead to riot, will produce an universal fermentation; and the first act of violence exer-

cised under pretence of maintaining the police, may lead to a horrible train of misfortunes.'

'The danger is for the troops. French soldiers, when they approach the center of discussions, when they share in the passions, and in the interests of the people, may forget the engagement which has made them soldiers, and remember only that nature has made them men.

'Danger, Sire, threatens those employments which are our first duty, and which will never be fully or permanently successful, unless in so far as the people shall consider them as entirely free. There is, besides, a contagion in all passionate emotions. We are but men; a distrust of ourselves, a dread of appearing weak may carry us beyond our aim. We shall be beset, besides, by violent and unguarded counsels; and calm reason, tranquil wisdom, do not deliver their oracles in the midst of tumult, of disorder, and of faction. The danger, Sire, is still more terrible; and you may

judge of its extent by the alarms which bring us into your presence. Great revolutions have arisen from causes much less striking. More than one enterprise, fatal to the nations, has been announced in a manner less threatening and less formidable.

'Do not believe those who speak to you with levity of the nation, and who represent it only according to their own particular views; sometimes insolent, rebellious, and seditious; sometimes submissive, obedient to the yoke, and ready to bend their neck in order to receive it. These two representations are equally false. We are always ready to obey you, Sire, because you command in the name of the laws; our fidelity is as unbounded as it is unquestioned. But we are prepared to resist all the arbitrary commands of those who abuse your name, because they are the enemies of the laws; our fidelity itself prescribes this resistance, and we shall always be proud of deserving the

reproaches which are drawn upon us by our firmness.

Sire, we beseech you, in the name of your country, in the name of your happiness, and of your glory, dismiss your soldiers to the quarters whence your counsellors have drawn them; dismiss this artillery, which is destined to cover your frontiers; dismiss, in particular, foreign troops, these allies of the nation whom we pay to defend us, and not to trouble our domestic peace; your majesty has no need of them. And why should a king, adored by twenty millions of Frenchmen; why should he, at great expence, surround his throne with some thousands of strangers? Sire, surrounded by your children, let their love be your guard. The deputies of the nation are called upon to join with you in consecrating the distinguishing privileges of royalty, and in placing them upon the immoveable basis of the liberty of the people. But when they fulfil their duty,

when they yield to their judgment and their feelings, would you expose them to the suspicion of having yielded only to fear? Alas! the only pure, the only immoveable authority is that which is yielded to you by all hearts; it is the just return for your benefits, and the immortal inheritance of the princes whose model you are.'

This insolently flattering harangue; this eloquently turned threat of a general insurrection, if the king, with a view to the security of good men, and the terror of bad, should keep a part of his armies with himself; if he should not give up his capital city to every excess of robbery and licentiousness, and the national assembly to the insults and threats of an assembled mob; this affectation of including mutineers and revolted vagrants in the praises of a virtuous people; the arrogant warning that it was incumbent on the king to yield, and the formal declaration that this was the only empire which it would be possible for him henceforth to

exercise, did not produce the expected effect upon the king's mind. Amid these respectful threats and hypocritical alarms, he saw too well that the time was come when he must either abandon or maintain his lawful authority; that they were exhorting him to allow himself to be disarmed, and to have his hands tied: he saw in particular, that by slightly alluding to his good intentions, they avoided every mention of the facts which rendered the precautions he had taken just and necessary. It became requisite, therefore, to explain himself; and he replied to this artificial language by reasons full of force and candour.

'No one,' said he to the deputies, 'is ignorant of the disorders and scandalous scenes which have been repeatedly acted at Paris and Versailles, under my eyes, and under those of the states-general. It is necessary for me to make use of those means which are in my power, to restore and to maintain order in the capital and in its neighbourhood.

One or my principal duties is to watch over the public safety. This is the motive which has led me to assemble troops around Paris. You may assure the states-general, that they are destined only to suppress, or rather to prevent such disorders, to maintain the exercise of the laws, to secure, and even to protect that liberty which ought to reign in your deliberations. From them every kind of restraint, as well as of tumult and violence, ought to be removed. None but ill designing people could have led my subjects into error respecting the true motives of the precautions which I take. I have constantly sought to do every thing which could tend to their happiness, and I have always had reason to be assured of their love and fidelity.

'If, however, the necessary presence of troops in the neighbourhood of Paris should still give umbrage, I should be disposed, upon the demand of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to

Noyon, or to Soissons, and I would repair to Compiegne.'

He was very sure that they would not demand this. Nothing was more contrary to the plan which they had formed, than to separate from the Parisian populace. It was therefore more than useless to express this intention; and if, in consequence of a new tumult, the king found such a translation necessary, why did he not command it? Why did he not go to Compiegne with his household and a respectable guard, declaring null, and contrary to the freedom of voting, every deliberation which should be formed amid the troubles with which Paris and Versailles were agitated.

The popular party took care not to leave their post. They had need of being supported by the populace; it was by agitating them that they rendered themselves powerful and formidable. Accordingly they replied, by the mouth of Mirabeau, that it was the troops who

ought to remove from the assembly, not the assembly from the troops. 'We petitioned,' said they, 'that the army, not that we ourselves, should be translated.'

From that time at least it was quite evident that the commons wished to act by means of the people; and in that contest, on which the two authorities were about to enter, they wished to retain all their own strength, and to leave none to the king.

It was just, however, that the king should retain at least a power of resistance. In the most limited monarchies the king has the right of the *veto;* and none had ever doubted the necessity of the royal sanction in order to bestow the form and the force of laws on the decrees of the popular representatives. The king, in fact, as being entrusted with the executive power, had a right to examine laws the execution of which he was to enforce; and in his character of first national representative, he was con-

stituted the superintendant of the rest. In the tumult and shock of opposing passions and interests which might divide a political assembly, it was often to be feared that a tumultuous discussion might not lead to the wisest and most useful resolution. Decrees might often pass which were contrary to the public good. A single voice above numerical equality might convert an unjust and violent decree into a law. Every time that passionate eloquence and sound reason should have to contend with each other, there was little security for the justest and best side of the question. The king, therefore, was necessary for moderating and regulating the legislation; the fulness of a legislative power ought to reside neither in his will alone nor in that of the popular representatives, but in the union of these two wills; and the consent of the one to the resolutions of the other composed this royal sanction.

Now, if the monarch was not allowed this right of examining and sanctioning

the laws, of giving his consent, or opposing his *veto*; if he saw himself deprived of his lawful authority; if he saw his throne shaken, his crown degraded, the sceptre of his fathers about to be broken in his hands, would it not be necessary that he should arm to defend them? Would it not be just, even in the eyes of the nation, that he should teach the commons to keep within the bounds which were marked out to them by their own deeds?

These questions agitated in council struck the ministers with terror.

'Every act of rigour,' said they, 'would be a step equally fatal, whether it was necessary to support or abandon it; it would be a hostility contrary to the sentiments of the king, capable of kindling the flames of civil war between himself and his people. If it succeeded it would render him odious; if it failed it would render him contemptible.'

Placed themselves in a strait between two rocks, in which either the royal au-

thority, or what was called public liberty, must perish, and with no credit or influence sufficient to save both, they used with the king every means of discussion which was afforded by his esteem and their own zeal; they shewed him nothing but imprudence and danger in forming this assemblage of discontented and corruptible troops of whom he thought himself secure. But, however firm might be their obedience, who could be assured that their approach would be sufficient to restore order and tranquillity? And if they should miss their aim of intimidating the people; if, instead of restraining them they should encourage them still more, what could be done to reduce, what to appease them? They saw at the head of the popular party men of a perverse disposition; they saw also hypocrites endowed with profound dissimulation; but they still judged well of the national character; they numbered a great many virtuous men among the commons; and the example of the king, his moderation, his

frankness, his generous kindness, might give prevalence to sentiments suited to his own. Their hope was the same as that of Lally-Tolendal. When talking to the nobility of his district, he said to them, ' Noble citizens, those men deceive you who say that the *tiers etat* have demanded justice only that they might be unjust, and have wished to free themselves from oppression only that they might become oppressors.' This worthy young man was not long in owning that he himself was deceived. But he sincerely hoped this; and Necker, Montmorin, La Luzerne, and Saint-Priest, hoped it as well as he. Thus, faithful alike to the state and to the king, they thought conciliatory measures alone practicable; for those of corruption were not to their taste, and the king would have rejected them.

It may be conceived how great the perplexity of this prince must have been. But every thing warned him that it was time to act with firmness, and for this

new line of conduct new ministers were required. The dismissal of those now in power was determined upon, the 11th of July.

In the morning of the 12th the intelligence was known at Paris; but it was not divulged till the evening, the hour of the theatre. A gloomy indignation took possession of every mind. It was no longer doubted that a determination had been formed at court, without the king's knowledge, to act with open force, and that they were determined violently to drag him into this fatal design, by removing wise and moderate men from his councils. The dismissal of Necker in particular, in the present critical state of the kingdom, seemed to be a proof that they were determined to ruin and starve Paris. The play was instantly interrupted. Men came in with a distracted air, and called out to the actors, 'Stop, withdraw, the kingdom is in mourning. Paris is threatened, our enemies prevail. Necker is no longer in power, he is dismissed.

he is gone, and all the ministers who loved the people are dismissed along with him.'

A sudden fear is spread through the halls, the actors disappear, the audience withdraw in consternation; and already a resolution is formed throughout the whole city of demanding that Necker, and all the good ministers who think with him, should be restored to the state.

In all the places where the people are accustomed to assemble on holidays, the fermentation was excessive. The palais-royal was filled with a multitude agitated like the waves of the sea in a storm. First a long dismal murmur, and then a more formidable sound was heard. The populace put on the green cockade; leaves of trees served their purpose; and having taken out of a shop the busts in wax of Necker and the duke of Orleans, they carried them through Paris as a signal of insurrection.

Another mob collected in the square of Louis XV, and the tumult continued to increase. Some troops were brought forward in order to disperse it. Their commandant, the baron de Bezenval, had gone thither with a grenadier company of the Swiss guards. The prince de Lambesc came and joined him at the head of fifty dragoons of the royal German regiment. The presence of the troops completed the irritation of the populace. They began to insult them. Their clamours were neglected; but the dragoons being assaulted with stones, which wounded some of them, lost patience, and Bezenval ordered the prince de Lambesc to make a movement which would oblige the people to fall back into the Tuilleries. This movement was made with so much moderation, that not one of the people was overturned or bruised. It was not till the dragoons were retreating that the prince with his own hand slightly wounded a madman who was

obstinately shutting against him the Pont-Tournant.

Presently a report was spread through Paris of a massacre of the citizens in the garden of the Tuilleries, into which, they said, the dragoons of Lambesc had rushed on horseback, sword in hand, with the colonel at their head, slaying the old men, trampling upon the children, overthrowing the women with child, or making them miscarry through fear. At the same time, upon a false report that their regiment was insulted, the grenadiers of the French guards forced the duke de Chatelet their colonel to allow them to leave the garden of the Hotel de Richelieu, where he kept them confined. From that time the regiment of guards was altogether devoted to the people; and this was what the seditious most ardently desired.

Thus Paris, left without tribunals, guard, or police, to the mercy of a hundred thousand men, wandering at midnight, and most of them wanting bread, seem-

ed to be on the point of being besieged without and plundered within. Twenty thousand troops were stationed round its walls, at Saint-Denis, at Courbevoye, at Charenton, at Sèves, at La Muette, in the Champ de Mars; and whilst they should blockade and cut off its provisions, it was on the point of being the prey of a starving people. Such was the terrible image which, on the night between the 12th and 13th of July, was present to every mind.

But the insurgents themselves, struck with the common terror, made no plunder; they opened no shops but those of the armourers, and they carried off nothing but arms.

As soon as day appeared, the city was found full of a distracted populace, who, striking at every door, demanded with loud cries, arms and bread. Thinking that there was a magazine of musquets and swords in the apartments below the town hall, they went there

with the view of procuring admittance. I stop here to explain who were the persons that at this moment occupied the Hotel de Ville, and by what kind of tribunal its police was enforced.

On the 10th of May, after the elections of the commons were finished, Target, the president of the assembly of the electors, persuaded them to hold a permanent sitting during the assemblage of the states-general. The resolution was formed with the full consent of the popular faction. Accordingly, at the end of June, after the royal sitting, when the electors found their hall at the archbishop's shut, they caused the Hotel de Ville to be opened, and there stationed themselves as the agents of the national assembly with the people of Paris.

I must bear them this testimony, that being invested with the care of public affairs in difficult and dangerous circumstances, they discharged their functions as became brave and worthy citizens.

To this assembly then, the people, on

the 13th of July, applied for arms, of which, they said, there was a collection in the cellars of the Hotel de Ville. But, as no such magazine was in existence, it was in vain that the people forced open the doors, the musquets belonging to the guards were alone found, and these were carried off.

Meanwhile, upon the sound of the alarm-bell, which was rung in every church, the districts assembled to consider of the means of providing for the security of the city both within and without; for there was an equally urgent necessity to defend it from the insurgents, of which it was full, as from the troops, by which it was surrounded. From that moment the citizens formed bands of volunteers, who voluntarily drew themselves up in the squares and public gardens. But arms were wanting; the people demanded them constantly at the Hotel de Ville. The mayor was sent for, who was the unfortunate Flesselles; he makes his way through the crowd; he calls

himself the father of the people, and he is applauded in that very place, over which, next day, his bleeding body was dragged.

The electors name a permanent committee at the town hall, to which the people, tormented with fear, might have access day and night. Flesselles, who was at the head of the committee, imprudently announces, that he expects immediately ten thousand musquets from Charleville, and thirty thousand soon after. Nay, it is said, he carried his fatal rashness so far, as to sport with the most impatient, by sending them to different places, where he made them believe they would find arms. They ran to these places, found they were deceived, and on their return publicly accused him to the people as an impostor, who at once betrayed and insulted them.

The committee of the electors, in order to quiet the apprehensions of the people, determined that a Parisian army should be immediately formed to the

number of forty-eight thousand men. All the districts came that very day, and offered to enlist in it. The green livery was thrown aside, and its place supplied by red and blue. (Green was the colour of a prince who was not republican.)

Meanwhile, the people had gone to the *garde-meuble*, and had carried off those precious arms that were kept there as curiosities, either for the beauty of the workmanship, or out of respect for their antiquity, and for the heroes whose glory they recalled. The sword of Henry IV was the spoil of a vagabond.

This small number of arms, however, was a feeble resource for so many thousands of men. They returned furiously to demand them from the town hall, declaring that it contained some, and accusing the electors of acting in concert with the enemies of the people, in order to leave Paris defenceless. Urged by these reproaches, which were accompanied with threats, the committee gave

authority to all the districts to make pikes, and other arms of that kind, with which the people were satisfied.

But a better expedient, to which the districts themselves had recourse, was to send that evening to the house of invalids, and summon the governor, Sombreuil, to give up to them the arms which they knew to be there deposited. The commander in chief of the troops, who had a camp in the neighbourhood, and to whom Sombreuil desired them to apply, asked time to send to Versailles, in order to ask the king's permission; and this time was granted him.

The terror of the following night assumed a more solemn and mournful appearance; the gates of the city were shut and guarded; patroles, already formed, kept the vagabonds in awe. Fires, kindled in the streets, made the horror more visible, struck terror into guilt, and shewed everywhere bands of the populace wandering like spectres. This vast and dismal silence was inter-

rupted only by the stifled and terrible voice of those men who cried from door to door, *Arms and bread!*

In the suburb Saint-Laurent, the house of the monks of Saint-Lazare, was set fire to and plundered. They expected to find a magazine of corn there.

Meanwhile, the *palais-royal* was full of those mercenaries who were employed in fanning the flame of sedition; and the night was spent in accusations and in atrocious proposals, not only against Flesselles, but against the committee of electors, who were accused as traitors to their country.

The evening before, five thousand pounds of powder, which were carrying out of Paris, had been seized at the gates and deposited in the Hotel de Ville, beneath the apartment of the electors. At midnight the small number of superintendants who had remained in the hall were informed, that fifteen thousand men, the trusty militia of the mutineers in the *palais-royal*, were coming with a resolu-

tion of forcing the hotel de Ville. Among the superintendants was a citizen, le Grand de Saint-Rene, a man of a weak and sickly temperament, but of firm and steady courage, 'Let them come and attack us,' said he, 'we shall blow up together.' Immediately he ordered the guards of the hotel to bring six barrels of powder into the neighbouring apartment. His resolution became known. The first barrel that was brought made the most courageous turn pale, and the people withdrew. The hotel de Ville was thus preserved by a single man. The kingdom would, in like manner, have been saved, if the king had had such men at the head of his councils and his armies. But he himself exhorted them to spare the people, and never could consent to any act of rigour against them; a virtuous weakness, which made his head fall under the axe of the executioner.

During this fearful night the citizens shut themselves up, each trembling for himself and for his family. But, in the

morning of the 14th, these personal fears yielding to the public alarm, the whole city was completely united; Paris had an army; this army, hastily and spontaneously assembled, was as yet ill acquainted with the rules of discipline; but public spirit supplied its place. It alone, like an invisible power, arranged every thing. What gave such a powerful influence to public spirit was, the address which had been employed in captivating public opinion. The best citizens, considering the troops who came to protect Paris only as enemies who were introducing fire and sword within its walls, all thought that they were fighting for their fire-sides, for their wives, and children. Necessity, danger, the care of defence and of common safety, the determination to perish, or to save what was dearest to them in the world, alone took possession of every mind. Hence, that surprising union of will and courage by which an immense and violently agitated city was converted into an army obedient to the

general intention, without receiving any particular order; so that, for once, every person was willing to obey, without any one to command.

This army was still in want of fire-arms and powder: and the committee of the city having declared anew that none could be found even in the arsenal, the people returned to the invalids. The order which Sombreuil expected from Versailles, did not arrive. The people were about to employ force; and such was the irresolution of the court, or such, rather, was the repugnance of the king to every kind of violence, that, in the Champ de Mars, a few steps from the house which had been forced open, the troops had received no order to defend it. Without meaning to yield any thing, they abandoned every thing, and thereby involved themselves both in disgrace and ruin.

It was under the eyes, therefore, of six Swiss batallions and eight hundred cavalry, both dragoons and hussars, who

all remained motionless in their camp, that the hospital of invalids was opened to the mob. Here we have a positive proof of what Bezenval has since affirmed, that the troops were forbidden to fire upon the citizens. The great advantage of the populace was, that the king would consent only to restrain them, without allowing them to be treated either as enemies or rebels. The same order seemed to be observed in Paris, at the barriers, at the *boulevards*, in the square of Lewis XV. This too was what rendered the troops, in all the surrounding posts, accessible to corruption, by the ease with which the people were allowed to converse with them.

The populace, both men and women, addressed the soldiers; and, with the glass in their hand, held out to them the allurement of joy and licentiousness. 'What!' said they, 'are you coming to make war against us? Are you coming to shed our blood? Could you be so inhuman as to draw your sword against

your brethren and friends? Are you not like us, Frenchmen and citizens? Are you not like us, the children of that people who seek only to be free, and to be delivered from oppression? You serve the king, you love him, and we too love this good king; we are ready to serve him. He is not the enemy of his people, but he is deceived; and you are commanded, in his name, to do what he does not wish. You serve not him, but those unjust nobles, who disgrace you by treating you like slaves. Come, brave soldiers, come, and avenge yourselves of those unworthy punishments by which you are degraded. *The king and liberty! Down with the aristocrats, our oppressors, and our tyrants!*'

The soldiers, who are naturally friendly to the people, were not deaf to this language. They saw only a step to take from poverty to abundance, from restraint to liberty. A great number deserted; and while they were so near Paris, it was

impossible that they should not be corrupted.

The populace, in the presence of the troops of the Champ-de-Mars, were left therefore at full liberty to ransack the hospital of invalids. They found in it twenty-eight thousand musquets; and, dragging this booty, and the cannons of the esplanade in triumph into Paris, they returned to the hotel de Ville. There they learned that the Marquis de Launay, governor of the Bastile, on being called upon, in his turn, to furnish arms and ammunition, replied that he had none. Instantly a general cry was heard in the *Place-de-Greve*—'Let us go and attack the Bastile.'

BOOK XVII.

AMONG the populace this resolution appeared sudden and unexpected: but it had been previously concerted in the councils of the revolutionary chiefs. The Bastile, as a state prison, was always odious, in consequence of the unjust manner in which, under the preceding reigns, the despotism of ministers had often employed it; as a fortress too, it was formidable, particularly to those populous and discontented suburbs which its walls commanded, and which, when they attempted to raise a riot, saw themselves under the cannon of its towers. The republican faction, therefore, in order to

move the people at pleasure, and to make them act with boldness, wished to be freed from this troublesome neighbour. The most peaceful and enlightened men also wished the Bastile to be destroyed, from hatred to that despotism of which it was the bulwark; in which they paid more regard to their apparent than real security, for the despotism of licentiousness is a thousand times more formidable than that of authority; and an enraged mob is the most cruel of tyrants. The Bastile, therefore, ought not to have been destroyed; but its keys should have been placed in the sanctuary of the laws. The court thought it impregnable: and so it would have been, or, at least, the attack would have cost much blood, if it had been defended. But the Marquis de Launay, to whom it had been entrusted, wanted the inclination, or the courage, or the skill, to employ the means which he had in his power of rendering the resistance destructive; and the populace, by whom he was so basely

assassinated, ought to have returned him their thanks.

De Launay had been in hopes of striking the people with terror; but, it is evident that he wished to spare them. He had fifteen pieces of cannon upon the towers; and whatever calumny may have said, in order to palliate the guilt of his assassination, not one of these cannons was fired. There were besides, within the castle, three cannons loaded with case-shot, pointed in front of the draw-bridge. These would have done great execution at the moment when the mob came rushing in crowds into the outer court; he fired no more than one, and that but once. It was provided with fire-arms of every description, six hundred musketoons, twelve rampart guns that carried balls of a pound and a half, and four hundred *biscaïans*. He had brought from the arsenal ammunition of every kind, bullets, fifteen thousand cartridges, and twenty thousand pounds of powder. Lastly, in

order to crush the besiegers if they should advance to the foot of the walls, he had caused a heap of stones and broken iron to be laid upon the two towers of the draw-bridge. But, amid all these preparations to maintain a siege, he had forgotten provisions; shut up in his castle, with eighty invalids, thirty-two Swiss soldiers, and his staff, all his provisions on the day of attack consisted of two sacks of flour and a little rice; a proof that the rest was merely for the sake of terror.

The small number of Swiss soldiers who had been sent to him were determined men, who were ready to defend themselves; the invalids he must have known to be otherwise; but he ought not, at least, to have exposed them to the fear of dying of hunger. Unequal to his situation, and full of that stupor into which a weak mind is thrown by the presence of danger, he viewed it with an eye fixed but troubled, rendered immoveable by astonishment rather than

by resolution. Unhappily, not a man in the council had that foresight which he wanted.

In order to intoxicate the people with their first success, the attack and taking of the Bastile has, as an exploit, been extravagantly boasted of. The following is what I learned from the mouth of the very man who was proclaimed and carried in triumph as the hero and leader of the enterprize.

'The Bastile,' said the brave Elie to me, 'was not taken by main force. It surrendered even before it was attacked. It surrendered upon the promise which I gave as a French officer, and in the name of the people, that no injury should be done to any one provided they surrendered.' Such is the plain fact, as it was attested to me by Elie. He dictated to me the following details.

The outer courts of the Bastile had been abandoned. Some determined fellows having dared to break the chains of the draw-bridge which inclosed the first,

the populace entered in crowds. Then, deaf to the voice of the soldiers, who, standing on the tops of the towers, avoided firing, but called out to them to depart, they attempted to make their way towards the walls of the castle. Then it was that the garrison fired, and the populace took flight and saved themselves under the walls of the outer court. One man dead, and a few wounded, struck terror as far as the hotel de Ville; and an urgent application was made by the mob, that the carnage should be stopped, and that deputations should be employed. Two arrived; one by the arsenal, and the other by the suburb of Saint-Anthony. 'Come forward,' cried the invalids from the top of the towers, 'we will not fire upon you, come forward with your flags. The governor is about to come down; we are just going to lower the bridge of the castle in order to introduce you, and we will give hostages.' Already the white flag was hoisted upon the towers, and the soldiers held

their musquets inverted as a signal of peace. But neither deputation dared to advance as far as the last outer court. Meanwhile, the mob pressed towards the draw-bridge, firing on all sides. The besieged had, therefore, reason to believe, that these pretended deputations were only a stratagem to surprise them; and, after having in vain called out to the people not to advance, they saw themselves under the necessity of firing in their turn.

The people, a second time repulsed, and enraged at seeing some of their number fall, took their usual vengeance. The barracks and shops of the outer court were plundered; the governor's house was burned to the ground. The firing of a single cannon, and the discharge of musketry, had dispersed that crowd of plunderers and incendiaries, when Elie, advancing at the head of a dozen brave citizens to the very brink of the ditch, called upon them to surrender, and promised that no harm should be done

to any one. He then saw a hand pass through an opening of the draw-bridge, and present him with a note. This note was received by means of a plank laid over the ditch; it was couched in these terms: 'We have twenty thousand pounds of powder. We will blow up the castle if you do not accept the capitulation.' Signed 'De Launay.'

Elie, after reading the note, called out that he accepted; and all hostilities from the fort ceased. De Launay, however, before surrendering to the people, wished that the capitulation should be ratified and signed at the town hall, and that, in order to secure his own safety and that of his band, a strong guard should receive and protect them. But the unhappy invalids, thinking to hasten their deliverance, did violence to the governor, and called out to the court, 'the Bastile surrenders.'

Then it was that de Launay, seizing the match of a cannon, threatened, and perhaps determined, to set fire to the

powder. The sentinels who guarded it, presented their bayonets to him; and he found himself under the necessity of surrendering without any farther precaution or delay.

The small draw-bridge of the fort being first opened, Elie entered with his companions, who were all brave men, and fully determined to keep their promise. As soon as the governor saw him, he embraced him and presented him with his sword and the keys of the Bastile.

'I refused the sword,' said he, 'and accepted only the keys.' The companions of Elie received the staff, and the officers of the place with the same cordiality, swearing to guard and defend them. But they swore in vain.

As soon as the great bridge was let down, and nobody knew what hand had done it, the people rushed into the court of the castle, and furiously seized upon the company of invalids. The Swiss soldiers, being dressed only in linen frocks, escaped amid the crowd; all the rest

were seized. Elie, and the honest fellows who had first entered along with him, used their utmost efforts to tear from the hands of the people the victims who had been delivered up by themselves. But their ferocity stuck obstinately to its prey. Many of these soldiers, who had been promised their lives, were assassinated; others were dragged like slaves into Paris. Twenty-two were led to the *Greve*, and after every mortification and inhuman treatment, they had the affliction of seeing two of their companions hanged. On their being presented at the town house, a madman said—'You have fired upon your countrymen, you deserve to be hanged, which you shall be immediately.' Luckily the French guards asked pardon for them; the people relented. But they had no pity for the officers of the place. De Launay, torn from the arms of those who wished to save him, had his head cut off under the walls of the hotel de Ville. Amid these assassins he

defended his life with the courage of despair; but he was overwhelmed by numbers. Delorme Salbray, his major, was slain in the same manner. The assistant-major, Mirai, had met with the same fate near the Bastile. Pernon, an old lieutenant of invalids, was assassinated on the wharf of Saint-Paul, as he was returning to the hotel. Another lieutenant, Caron, was covered with wounds. The head of the marquis de Launay was carried through Paris by that very populace whom, if destitute of pity, he might have destroyed.

Such were the exploits of those who have since been called the heroes and the conquerors of the Bastile. On the 14th of July 1789, the people had assembled about eleven in the morning; at forty minutes after four it had surrendered. At half past six the head of the governor was carried in triumph to the palais-royal. The number of the conquerors has been estimated at eight hundred; but this calculation included men who had not even approached the place.

The populace, after this conquest, intoxicated with their power, but agitated with never-ceasing anxieties and suspicions, and rendered more fierce by the dangers which they still trembled at having encountered, now appeared only under the character of a cruel and jealous tyrant. It should have been considered that the dread of punishment was for them the only barrier against the most criminal licentiousness, and in a time of trouble and sedition the defence of the Bastile was an object of high importance to the public repose. We have seen the extreme degree in which it had been neglected. Not even Broglio, though both minister and general, nor the king's council, nor the party of the nobles, nor any person whatever, had thought of inquiring if the garrison was sufficient, if it had bread and provisions, and if the governor was possessed of that cool and determined courage which was necessary to defend it. It had been supposed either useless or impregnable, or rather it had been altogether forgotten.

It is not the less true, that if Launay had employed his artillery, he would have struck Paris with terror. He doubtless remembered that he served a good king; and every one of the populace remembered it as well as he.

All Paris, at the moment of attack, had run to the Bastile. Persons of every age and sex crowded confusedly around these ramparts planted with cannon. What was it then which freed them from apprehension? *The king allows his servants to threaten, but the king does not wish his people to be destroyed.* What a fatal lesson has this example given to kings?

In the evening, the mob, still more thirsty of blood, driven from crime to crime, demanded the head of Flesselles, who, in the morning, they said, had refused them arms, and who, in concert with the court, had deceived, betrayed, and mocked them with the utmost insolence; the Greve and the hotel de Ville resounded with these clamours. But

the focus of the fermentation and popular fury was not the Greve, it was the district of Saint-Roch, in the division of the palais-royal; there it was that Flesselles had been proscribed.

During the attack of the Bastile, the unhappy man had been at the committee in the hotel de Ville, when he was assaulted by a band of wretches, who loaded him with abuse, and warned him of approaching death. After two hours of silent anguish, he resolved to go from the hall of the committee into the great hall, and ask from the people to be heard and judged by the general assembly of the electors; weary of life, and wishing rather to die than to endure so cruel an agony. In fact, to throw himself among this merciless rabble, was delivering himself to certain death. He went, and took his seat in the circle of the electors. He saw himself aimed at from all quarters. But other incidents having diverted the fury of which he was the object, he took advantage of this respite, and leaning to

wards a clergyman who sat near him (it was the abbé Fauchet), he held out his hand, and besought him in a whisper to hasten to the district of Saint-Roch. 'My life is at stake,' added he, 'it is from that quarter that all the accusations against me are brought. Go and tell them, that I ask only time to justify myself. Fauchet, being moved with a sentiment of compassion towards him, went to implore this favour, but implored it in vain. Their object was, to terrify those who, like Flesselles, thought themselves attached by duty to the king's party; and in order to overcome probity by terror, victims were still necessary. The people were not yet sufficiently inured to guilt, and they wished to harden them by practice. The district by which the insurrection was conducted, was therefore inexorable, and Flesselles never again saw the man from whom he expected safety.

Here I must notice what sort of men those were who were sent to the hotel de

Ville to demand the head of Flesselles. They were, according to the report of a faithful witness, men armed like savages; they were men, such as one never remembers having seen in daylight. Whence did they come? Who had drawn them from their dark retreats?

At the head of the committee of electors, said the same witness, Flesselles still shewed some degree of confidence: even to the fatal moment, he was seen listening to every person with so natural an air of attention and affability, that he would have extricated himself, had not the resolution of destroying him been irrevocably formed. He was witness to the ferocious joy displayed at the sight of that lance on the point of which was the head of the governor of the Bastile. He was witness to the efforts which were made on this occasion by some good citizens to rescue from the people some of their victims. He heard the cries of those who demanded that he himself should be given

up to them. Nevertheless, amid so many horrors, he made a desperate attempt to escape; and thinking himself forgotten for a moment, he dared to leave his place and mix among the crowd. He had actually penetrated it. But those who had pursued him out of this hall, and who doubtless had promised his death, pursued him, still crying out, '*To the palais-royal! To the palais-royal!*' 'Let it be so,' said he, going out. And the moment after, upon the stair of the hotel de Ville, one of these wretches shot him through the head with a pistol. This head was also carried through Paris in triumph, and the triumph was applauded. The same applause was given to the murder of the invalid soldiers, who were seen slaughtered in the streets; so completely had the delirium of fury stifled in their souls every sentiment of humanity.

'I observed,' continues my witness, making use of an expression of Tacitus, 'that if few of the people then dared to commit crimes, many were pleased

with them, and nobody resisted them." These ruffians who were seen filling the town-hall were not the nation. Some were almost naked, others strangely dressed in habits of different colours, half frantic, and most of them either wishing they knew not what, or demanding the death of those who were marked out to them, and demanding it in a tone which more than once it was impossible to resist.

If the national assembly had chosen to foresee the evils with which the kingdom was threatened by this tremendous anarchy; if they had foreseen how impossible it would be for them again to throw the chains of lawful authority over this wild beast which they had let loose; if those who flattered it had reflected that one day perhaps they themselves might be its prey, they would have shuddered with a salutary fear. But, in order to acquire supreme authority for themselves, they thought only of disarming that authority which alone could produce general safety.

The citizens of Paris, allowing themselves to be blinded to their true interests, gave up their minds to the transports of a senseless joy, when it was determined that the Bastile should be destroyed. They had not displayed more gladness when, under the reign of Louis XI, the iron cages were broken. Yet history will bear this testimony to the memory of Louis XVI, that of seven prisoners who were then in the Bastile, not one had been sent there during his reign.

Whilst the city of Paris broke into insurrection against the royal authority, the stirrers up of rebellion triumphed at Versailles, while they appeared to lament over the misfortunes and the crimes which they had commanded; and in order to terrify the king, they afflicted him with daily accounts of them. 'You rend my heart more and more,' said he at last, 'by the account you give me of the misfortunes of Paris. It is not possible to believe that they can have been occasioned by the orders which I gave to the

troops.' No, they were not; for these were only to maintain order and peace.

Meanwhile the assembly demanded from the king, with the most extreme urgency, the removal of the troops, the dismissal of the new, and the recal of the former ministers. He began by ordering the dismissal of the troops which were in the Champ-de-Mars. But the departure of the troops from the other encampments was not ordered; and, in Paris, which always thought itself threatened with an assault, the night between the 14th and 15th of July was still terrible. The people, becoming always fiercer, trembled with fear and rage; the motions made at the palais-royal were only for lists of proscription. Next day, while the national assembly was agitated by a multitude of opinions, the voice of the baron de Marguerit was heard.—'No discussion,' said he, 'ought to be carried on in such afflicting circumstances. Every superfluous word is a crime against humanity. I persist in the

proposal which I yesterday made, to send new deputies immediately to the king, who will say: "Sire, blood flows, and the blood of your subjects. Every day, every instant, augments the frightful disorders which reign in the capital, and throughout the whole kingdom. Sire, the evil is at its height. It is only by removing the troops from Paris and Versailles, and by instructing the representatives of the nation to carry in your name words of peace, that tranquillity can be restored. Yes, Sire, there is a means worthy of you, and especially of your private virtues; this means, founded on the unalterable love of Frenchmen for their king, is from this day to place your whole confidence in the representatives of your faithful nation. We beseech you, Sire, to come without delay to the national assembly, where you may hear truth, and may concert with the natural council of your majesty the speediest measures for restoring tranquillity and

union, and for securing the safety of the state."

This proposal was adopted by acclamation, and a new deputation was about to be sent to the king, when the duke de Liancourt arrived and informed them that the king was just coming, and that he was in the most favourable disposition that could be wished.

This news gave the assembly the most sensible pleasure, and all virtuous men shewed it openly, when Mirabeau made haste to quench it. 'The blood of our brethren,' said Mirabeau, 'is flowing at Paris; this good city has been thrown into convulsive agonies by its attempts to defend its own liberty and ours; can we then abandon ourselves to any degree of joy before knowing whether tranquillity, peace, and happiness, are to be restored? Although all the evils of the people were to end, should we be insensible to those which they have already endured? Let a mournful respect

be the first reception given to the monarch by the representatives of an unfortunate people. The silence of the people is the best lesson for kings.'

As if the blood shed, as if the crimes of the people, the crimes commanded by himself and by his accomplices, could be imputed to the king! Nevertheless, notwithstanding this palpable and atrocious calumny, the vehemence of his discourse threw the assembly anew into a gloomy silence, when the king appeared, and standing in the midst of the deputies, who stood, like him, and listened, he thus spoke:

'Gentlemen, I have assembled you in order to consult upon the most important affairs of the state. None is more urgent, or more sensibly affects my heart, than the terrible disorders which reign in the capital. The chief of the nation comes with confidence into the midst of its representatives, expresses to them his affliction, and invites them to discover the means of restoring

order and tranquillity. I know the unjust prejudices which have been inspired; some, I know, have dared to publish that your persons were not secure. Can it be necessary, then, to assure you of the falsehood of these criminal reports, which my known character was already sufficient to disprove? Well, then, I now unite myself with my nation, I trust myself with you. In these circumstances, then, assist me to secure the safety of the state; I expect this from the national assembly. The zeal of the representatives of my people combined for the common safety, inspires me with the fullest confidence; and, depending upon the fidelity and love of my subjects, I have given orders for the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles. I authorize, and even invite you, to make known my intentions to the capital.'

After the reply of the president, which ended with requesting the king to allow the assembly always a free and immediate communication with his person, the king

withdrew, when the whole assembly followed, and formed a procession behind him, from the hall to the palace.

A majestic spectacle was doubtless formed by this national procession, which accompanied the king through a crowd who made the air resound with vows and acclamations; whilst the queen, who was on the balcony upon the top of the castle, embraced the dauphin, presented him to the people, and recommended him, as it were, to the deputies of the nation. But this was really the triumph of the votaries of sedition, to whom the king had delivered himself up. Few as yet were in the secret of the revolution; the rest were sincere. But the hypocrites, laughing in the bottom of their heart at the noble sincerity of the king, and the credulous simplicity of the multitude, applauded each other on account of the rapid strides which their power was making, and allowed these sentiments of joy and mutual love to evapo-

rate, knowing that they would be able to suppress them in due time.

The numerous deputation which set out for Paris, was received, in its passage from the barrier to the hotel de Ville, by an army of a hundred thousand men, variously armed with instruments of destruction. This was a scene evidently preconcerted, as if with a view of displaying their power, of commanding obedience if the king had not yielded; and with this terrible display was mingled the joy of conquerors, on account of that unbounded liberty which had produced only crimes, and with which the best citizens still allowed themselves to be intoxicated. A blockade, a siege, a famine, a massacre, were the gloomy phantoms with which they had been terrified; and on seeing the departure of the troops, which, they believed, were instructed to commit those crimes, Paris thought she had no longer any thing to fear.

The deputies, on their arrival at the hotel de Ville, were applauded and crowned, as the saviours and deliverers of a besieged city: a perpetual calumny, which the marquis de la Fayette, in the discourse which he pronounced, did not choose to contradict, not daring to do homage to the king's intentions from the fear of offending the people.

It would have been natural, it would have been just, at this moment, to have reminded them of what the king had so often said, that he had assembled troops only with the view of maintaining order and tranquillity in Paris, and to secure the repose of good citizens. But this Fayette passed over in silence.

'Gentlemen,' said he, 'the moment most desired by the national assembly is now come: *the king was deceived*, but he is deceived no longer. He has come this day into the midst of us without arms, without troops, without any of that parade which is useless to good kings. He informs us that he has ordered the

troops to withdraw: *let us forget our misfortunes,* or rather let us remember them only that we may for ever shun similar disasters.'

The sincere and courageous Lally Tolendal spoke in his turn; and that my relation may be as genuine as possible, I shall copy his own.

'In the hall where we were received, there were citizens,' says he, 'of every class. An immense multitude was in the square, and I experienced how easily, if every one had agreed in wishing it, all their warmth might have been directed towards order and justice. They fell into raptures when they heard me speak of the honour of the French name. When I said to them that they should be free, that the king had given his promise, that he had thrown himself into our arms, that he entrusted himself to them, that he dismissed his troops; they interrupted me with cries of *Vive le roi.* When I said to them, we come from the king and the national assembly to pre-

sent you with peace; you, on your side, must present peace to the king, and to the national assembly; they eagerly repeated, "Peace, peace." When I added: you love your wives, your children, your king, your country; they all replied a thousand times, "Yes." Then, urging them farther, I ventured to say: you would not wish to destroy all that you love from a sanguinary discord; there will surely be no more proscriptions. The law alone ought to pronounce them. There will be no more bad citizens, your example will render them good. They again repeated, "Peace, and no more proscriptions."

From that time, therefore, nothing was more easy than to restore order, and to maintain the happiest intelligence between the monarch and his people.

The king wished nothing so much as to be beloved; he thought nothing a hardship which could obtain this reward. The city of Paris had just chosen Bailly as its mayor, and la Fayette as the

commander of its militia. The king, who alone ought to have made these appointments, agreed without difficulty to the choice which the city made. They had demanded the recal of Necker; Necker was recalled, as well as Montmorin, la Luzerne, and Saint-Priest, who had shared his disgrace; and the new ministers prevented their dismissal by giving in their resignation. Lastly, Paris, troubled anew by perfidious promoters of disturbance, expressed a desire that the king himself should come to the hotel de Ville in order to disperse their false alarms; and the king went, on the 17th of July 1789, without any other guard than the armed citizens of Versailles and Paris, amid two thousand men, armed with scythes, with pick-axes, with muskets, and lances, and dragging cannons along with them.

On the arrival of the king, and during his passage, every acclamation in his favour was prohibited; and if, in addition to the cries of *vive la nation!* some

cried *vive le roi!* silence was imposed upon them by villains stationed for that purpose. The king perceived this insult, and silently endured it. After having heard the harangue made at the barrier by Bailly the mayor, in which he told him, that, if Henry IV had conquered his city, the city in its turn had now won its king, he received at the hotel de Ville the republican cockade; he received it without repugnance; and as he himself was sincerely reconciled to his people, he shewed so much candour and kindness that all hearts were at last moved. The congratulation of the orators raised the emotion to enthusiasm; and when Lally Tolendal began to speak, there was nothing but bursts of sensibility, and transports of love.

'Well, citizens,' said he, 'are you satisfied? You now see that king whom you loudly demanded, and whose very name excited your transports, while two days ago we brought him into the midst of you. Enjoy his presence and his be-

nefits. Behold him who has restored your national assemblies, and who wishes to render them perpetual! Behold him who has been pleased to establish your liberty, your property, upon an immoveable foundation! Behold him who has offered, if we may so speak, to admit you to a share of his authority, reserving only that which was necessary for your happiness, that which ought for ever to belong to him, and which you yourselves ought to entreat he would never relinquish. Ah! let him at length meet with consolation; let his noble and pure heart carry hence that peace which he so well deserves; and since he has surpassed his predecessors in virtue, since he has chosen to centre his power and his grandeur in your love, to be obeyed, to be guarded by it alone, let us be neither less feeling nor less generous than our king; and let us prove that even in power, even in grandeur, he has gained a thousand times more than he has sacrificed.

'And you, Sire, allow a subject, who in fidelity and devotion is not inferior to all those who surround you, or to any of those by whom you are obeyed, allow him to raise his voice towards you, and to say: behold that people which idolizes you, that people which is intoxicated by your very presence, and whose sentiments for your sacred person can never be the object of a doubt. View, Sire, and console yourself with the view of all the citizens in your capital; their eyes, their voices, their hearts fly to meet you. There is not a single man here, who for you, and for your lawful authority, is not ready to shed the last drop of his blood. No, Sire, no such misfortune is reserved for this generation of the French, as that of giving the lie to fourteen centuries of loyalty. We will all perish, if necessary, to defend a throne which is as sacred to us as to you, and to the august family which we placed upon it eight hundred years ago. Believe, Sire, believe, that we never wound-

ed your heart without rending our own; that, amid the calamities which the nation feels, one is the necessity of afflicting you even with a complaint, by which it warns, by which it implores, but by which it never accuses you. At length, all afflictions are to disappear, all troubles are to be appeased. One word of your mouth has restored every thing to tranquillity. Our virtuous king has recalled our virtuous counsellors; woe to the public enemies who should again attempt to sow division between the nation and its chief! King, subjects, citizens, let us join our hearts, our wishes, our efforts, and let us display, before the eyes of the universe, the magnificent spectacle of one of the first of nations free, happy, triumphing under a just king whom it reveres and loves, and who, as he owes nothing to force, will be wholly indebted to his virtues and our affection.'

Tolendal was a thousand times interrupted with cries of *vive le roi!* The people were delighted to be restored

to their natural feelings; the king shared them; and his emotion expressed them more warmly than eloquence could have done. But if these sentiments had been lasting between him and his people, he would have been thought too powerful by those factious men who wished to reduce him to the mere phantom of a king.

BOOK XVIII.

AMONG the commons, as among the people, there were two characters: one, moderate, feeble, and timid, which was that of the greater number; the other, fiery, outrageous, and violent; this was the party of the votaries of faction. The latter, with the view of gaining the other, had at first displayed only reasonable and pacific views. One of their organs had been heard beseeching the clergy, *in the name of a God of peace*, to unite with the order, among whom their ruin was planning. We have just seen Mirabeau, in his harangue to the king, affect an hypocritical zeal and respect; but, after being secure of

the determination and devoted attachment of the lower orders; of the feebleness, the carelessness, the timidity of the opulent and peaceful class, this party saw itself in a capacity of ruling public opinion, and ceased to dissemble.

The day after that in which the king had gone with so much frankness to deliver himself up to the national assembly, they undertook to lay it down as a principle, that this assembly had a right to interfere in the formation of the ministry; and the two orators, who, upon this subject, directly attacked the royal authority, were Mirabeau and Barnave, both endowed with a popular eloquence; Mirabeau, with more vehemence and bursts of passion, and often also with artifice and deceit: Barnave, with more frankness, more nerve, and more vigour. Both had supported the proposal of depriving the king of the free choice of his ministers; a right which Tolendal and Mounier had strongly defended, maintaining, that without this freedom of

choosing the objects of his confidence, the king would have no power at all. The decree resulting from this discussion, had left it undetermined; but this did not prevent the question, when once broached, from being the signal of a struggle between the two powers.

With a view to this combat, the commons stood in need of a force which might be always active and threatening. Hence all the obstacles which Tolendal experienced in his motion of the 20th of July. We must hear him again.

'In the situation to which we were then reduced, it was evident,' said he, 'that the only dangers which threatened liberty arose from the projects of faction, and the approach of anarchy. The national assembly had to guard against nothing except the very excess of their own power. There was not a moment to lose for the re-establishment of public order. News already arrived, that the commotions experienced in the capital, had been felt not only in the neighbouring

cities, but in distant provinces. They appeared in Britanny; they existed in Normandy and Burgundy; they threatened to spread themselves over the whole kingdom. Emissaries, who had evidently set out from a central point, ran over the high roads, and through the towns and villages, without stopping. Here, they sounded the alarm, announced the arrival sometimes of foreign troops, and sometimes of robbers, cried, everywhere, to arms! and often dispersed money.

(In fact, I myself saw them passing on horseback through the hamlet where I then was, and calling out that hussars were spreading desolation around us, and were setting fire to our harvests; that such a village was on fire, and such another deluged with blood. Nothing of all this was true; but fear roused the people to fury, and this was their whole aim.)

Tolendal, with his hands full of letters, which bore witness to the excesses

which were everywhere committed with impunity, went to the national assembly, and proposed a proclamation, which, after presenting to all Frenchmen a view of their situation, of their duties, and of their hopes, invited them all to peace, and to security of life and property; threatened the wicked, protected the good, maintained the laws and tribunals in vigour and activity. 'This plan,' said he, 'was overwhelmed with applauses: a second reading was demanded, and the acclamations redoubled. But what was my astonishment when I saw a party rise up and oppose it? According to one, my sensibility had blinded my judgment. These conflagrations, these imprisonments, these assassinations, were disagreeable circumstances, which they must learn to endure, since they might have been expected. According to another, my imagination had conjured up dangers which had no existence. There was no danger except in my motion. Here there was danger for liberty, be-

cause the salutary watchfulness of the people would thus be removed; there was danger for the assembly, which would see Paris declaring against them, if they accepted the motion; there was danger for the legislative power, which, after having broken the formidable action of authority, was about to restore to it an energy still more formidable.'

The murder of Berthier, the intendant of Paris, that of his father-in-law Foulon, who were massacred at la Greve, their heads carried round, and the body of Foulon dragged through the *palais-royal*, shewed that the populace, intoxicated with blood, still thirsted for more, and seemed to call upon the assembly to make no delay in adopting the motion of Tolendal. He himself will now tell us how little impression was made by this horrible event.

'Next day (the 21st of July) I was awakened by cries of grief. A young man entered my room pale, disfigured, threw himself upon me, and said, in a

voice broken by sobs—'Sir, you have spent fifteen years of your life in defending the memory of your father, save the life of mine, and let him be brought to trial. Present me to the national assembly, and let me demand a trial for my father.' This was the son of the unfortunate Berthier. I conducted him immediately to the president of the assembly. Unhappily, it did not meet in the morning, and in the evening it was too late to do any thing for this unhappy man. The father-in-law and son-in-law had been torn in pieces.

'It may be well supposed,' continued Tolendal, 'that at next meeting I made haste to fix the general attention upon this horrible event. I spoke in the name of a son, whose father had been massacred; yet a son who was in mourning for his own (it was Barnave), dared to reproach me with feeling, when I ought only to have thought. He added what I will not so much as repeat (Was the blood then which has been shed so very

precious?) and every time that he raised his arms amid his sanguinary declamations, he shewed to every eye *weepers*, the mournful marks of his recent misfortune, and the undoubted evidence of his barbarous insensibility.'

But so completely depraved were the minds of the promoters of faction, that a cold-blooded cruelty was accounted virtue, and humanity was accounted weakness. Thirty-six country seats demolished or burned in a single province; in Languedoc, a gentleman of the name of Barras cut in pieces before his wife, who was with child and ready to lie in; in Normandy, a paralytic old man thrown upon a burning pile, and so many other enormities committed were, in the assembly, either passed over in silence or treated as slight matters if any one brought them forward.

It was the policy of the seditious to allow the people no time for reflection. A moment's coolness would have shewn them that they were deceived,

that these ambitious men made them accomplices only with the view of making them slaves, and that they wished to drive them from crime to crime, till they could no longer see any safety but in executing all their guilty commands. Accordingly, the proclamation proposed by Tolendal did not pass, after a long delay, till every thing had been expunged which could inspire the people with moderation. Again, from the fear of giving too much authority to this pacific proclamation, even in its weakened state, they did not choose that it should be sent by the king into the provinces, and read from the pulpit; but each of the deputies was entrusted with the care of transmitting it to his constituents.

The 31st of July was a day distinguished by the return of Necker, and by the species of triumph which he obtained at the hotel de Ville.

He came from Basle, where he had received two letters of recal; one from the king, and the other from the national assembly. On his road he had seen the

enormities to which the people abandoned themselves; he had attempted to tranquilize them, to infuse milder sentiments, and to inspire everywhere a horror for violence and injustice. He found the roads covered with Frenchmen, who were chilled with horror and affright by the events that had happened at Paris, and the assassinations committed near the hotel de Ville; and who were going in search of another country. Informed of these bloody scenes, he conceived, from that time, the most ardent wish to divert the people of Paris from their blind cruelty, to recal them to sentiments of humanity, and to make them wipe off the reproach with which their criminal violence had stained the national character. Here I only repeat the account given by himself; and whatever errors or faults may be imputed to him, no one, at least, will doubt his sincerity. In assurance of this, I will give, in his words, a relation which will be, on that account, more interesting, and at the same time, not less true.

'Great and happy day for me,' (the 28th of July 1789) said he, 'splendid and memorable era of my life! when, after receiving the most tender marks of affection from an immense people, I obtained from their numerous deputies assembled at the hotel de Ville, and then from themselves, with cries of joy, not only the entire freedom of the prisoner whom I defended (the baron de Bezenval), but a general amnesty, a thorough oblivion of all grounds of complaint and distrust, a generous renunciation of those sentiments of hatred and vengeance with which they were so strongly inflamed; in short, a kind of peace and union between that great multitude of citizens, some of whom had already fled their country, and others were about to leave it. This honourable determination was the reward of my tears: I had asked it on account of the interest which, at that moment, I inspired—I had asked it as an acknowledgment of my last sacrifice—I had asked it as the sole and only

reward which I would ever demand. I besought, I humbled myself in every possible manner, in order to succeed. I called into action all the powers of my soul, and being seconded by the eloquence of a feeling and generous citizen (Clermont-Tonnere), I gained the object of my wishes; and this first favour was granted unanimously, with bursts of enthusiasm and kindness which rendered it still more delightful.'

The following too was the resolution of the general assembly of electors, who met at the hotel de Ville on the same day. 'In consequence of the sincere, sublime, and affecting discourse of M. Necker, the assembly of electors, deeply affected with the sentiments of justice and humanity which he breathes, has decreed, that, the day in which this beloved and necessary minister was restored to France, should be a holiday. They, therefore, declare, in the name of the inhabitants of this capital, and with the certainty of their concurrence, that

they pardon all their enemies; that they prohibit every act of violence contrary to the present decree; and that they henceforth regard those as the only enemies of the nation, who shall, in any manner, disturb the public tranquillity.

'They determine besides, that the present decree shall be read in the parish churches, shall be published by sound of trumpet in all the streets and squares, and sent to all the municipalities of the kingdom. To applaud it will be the distinguishing mark of a good Frenchman.'

This was salvation to the state, but it was ruin to plans which could succeed only by means of trouble and terror.

'On the night of this memorable day,' continues Necker, 'all was changed. The chiefs of the democracy had other views. None of them wished either for kindness, or for oblivion, or for amnesty; they stood in need of all the passions of the people; they stood particularly in need of their mistrust; and

they wished, at any price, to prevent such a great and important event from being ascribed to my wishes and to my influence. The districts were therefore assembled, and were inflamed against a declaration, which their own representatives, the old electors named by themselves, which the general assembly at the hotel de Ville had unanimously adopted, and which the first wish of the people had ratified. My hope, amid this unfortunate opposition, was the national assembly. But they approved of the opinion of the districts; and I saw the edifice of my happiness overturned from its foundation. Yet, what was the object to which I had attached this happiness? It was to retain in the midst of us, those whose wealth and expenditure were the support of industry; to see the ideas of persecution supplanted by a sentiment of confidence and magnanimity; to prevent that exasperation which is the inevitable consequence of the fears which we disdain to tran-

quillize; to preserve the French nation from those tremendous inquisitory tribunals which are marked by the name of committees of inquiry; in short, to render virtue more amiable, by giving it a less fierce aspect, and by shewing how it may be allied to sentiments of mildness, of indulgence, and of kindness, the noblest and best ornament of human nature. Ah! how many misfortunes would have been prevented, if the determination formed at the hotel de Ville had not been reversed, if the first wish of the people, if this sacred emotion had not been despised.'

While Necker spoke thus, he was far from foreseeing the atrocities which were to fill up the measure of former crimes.

But, from that time, he must have felt how misplaced and how miseraby useless he himself must be, amid men who disdained every principle of morality, and every sentiment of justice and humanity.

It was by the exercise of the most violent despotism that the decree of the hotel de Ville had been annulled; and Tolendal, that other witness whom no one dared to contradict, has loudly declared what Necker passed over in silence.

On the approach of night the promoters of faction had assembled in the *palais-royal*, where history will be forced to say, that morals were corrupted, that the troops were debauched, that the carcases of the dead were dragged along, and the heads of the living devoted. There they had sworn to make the decree of the hotel de Ville be revoked, and had begun their march for that purpose. One terrified district had communicated its fear to several others; the alarm-bell had sounded; the band had swelled; the hotel deVille had been threatened with a siege; in short, upon the mere remonstrance of a few districts, the assembled electors of Paris had been forced to yield; and, by a new decree,

pretending to explain that of the morning, had really retracted it.

On the 1st of August, the day appointed for the election of a president, Thouret was chosen by ballot; upon which the murmuring and threats of the seditious were instantly heard in the assembly. The election was stigmatized at the *palais-royal* as treason; Thouret was proscribed if he accepted the office; they threatened to assassinate him in his house. He resigned; and this gave a mortal blow to the liberty of the assembly, which was chiefly composed of weak minds, whose silence, or whose votes, were commanded by fear.

The tribunals were themselves terrified; the laws had no force, and were despised by the people. They had heard that the ancient edicts were annulled; they refused to pay taxes previously established; nobody dared to compel them, and the faction allowed them to believe that these taxes were taken off.

Meanwhile, the funds of the revenue were all exhausted, and their sources al-

most dried up. Necker laid before the assembly the distress in which he found himself, and asked authority to borrow thirty millions at five per cent. This moderate interest was malignantly cavilled at; a fifth was struck off; and the public viewing Necker now only as a minister thwarted and disliked by the commons, the decline of his credit soon followed.

A patriotic contribution was the momentary resource of the assembly, and for any thing more, they allowed the minister to weary himself out with anxiety to supply the wants of the nation; and began the work of a constitution, which was created by their own authority, not only without any power or consent from the nation, but in defiance of express prohibitions, which the nation themselves had given in their mandates, against touching any of the ancient and fundamental principles of the existing monarchy.

Till then, hopes had been always en-

tertained of some termination to the usurpation of the commons, and every means of conciliation had been employed. The evening sitting of the 4th of August had been distinguished by resolutions and by sacrifices, which ought to have given general satisfaction. The clergy and nobility had made, with acclamation, a resignation of their privileges. These renunciations, made with a kind of enthusiasm, had been received in the same manner, and a very great majority of the assembly had viewed them as the seal of a full and lasting reconciliation. The worthy archbishop of Paris had proposed that a *Te Deum* should be sung; Tolendal, who never lost sight of the safety of the state, had proposed that Louis XVI should be proclaimed the *Restorer of French liberty;* both proposals had been carried unanimously. In short, the king himself had consented, without reserve, to all the renunciations which had been decreed in the sitting of the 4th of August. But he refused his simple

acceptance to the ambiguous declaration of the rights of man, and to nineteen articles of the constitution which had been presented to him. There were even other articles, to which, it was foreseen, he would refuse his sanction; and although the *veto* which he retained had only the power to suspend a law, this was enough to stop the revolutionary movement. It was necessary to overcome this obstacle, and the king, if they should force him to resist, might assume a resolution, of which he had hitherto denied himself the exercise.

This was really what led them to form the design of having the king at Paris, and made them send to Versailles, on the 5th of October 1789, thirty thousand of the seditious, with cannons at their head, and a crowd of those abandoned women who are set foremost in every mob. The pretence of their mission was to complain of the dearness of bread.

I will not describe the brutality of this populace, led to Versailles to carry off the king and his family. The

proceedings of the Chatelet have revealed this horrible mystery, this crime, of which the assembly vainly attempted to clear the duke of Orleans and Mirabeau. The facts are recorded in the memoirs of the time, which my children will read. They will shudder to see the faithful guards, whom the king had forbidden to fire upon the people, massacred on the very threshold of the queen's apartment, and their heads carried on pikes under the windows of the palace; they will see this queen, distracted and trembling for the king and for her children, fly from her bed, which is soon after pierced with bayonets, and throw herself into the arms of the king, where she expected to die; they will see this august couple surrounded by a ferocious mob, to whose rage they opposed the most magnanimous mildness, whom they endeavoured to affect by the sight of their children, and asked what they wished them to do in order to appease them? '*Let the king come with us to Paris.*' This was the reply of the people, and

the acknowledgment of the plot which they were employed to execute.

One thing, which cannot be forgotten, is, that on the night in which this sanguinary horde filled the apartments of the palace, some voices were raised in the assembly of deputies to propose that they should go in a body, to protect the king and check the violence of the people. Mirabeau insolently repelled this motion, saying, 'That it would not become the dignity of the national assembly to leave their places.' He was careful not to oppose his own work.

The king had it still in his power to withdraw, and every thing was prepared for his departure; his carriages, his guards waited for him and his family, at the gates of the orangery; some faithful friends urged him to take advantage of the time in which the people should be dispersed through Versailles and immersed in sleep. But a greater number, trembling and weeping, besought him

on their knees, not to abandon them. Deceived by the security of La Fayette, who assured him that every thing would soon be tranquil, the king, by the fatality of his fortune or of his character, yielded to his destiny, and lost that moment which he was never more to find.

As soon as he was arrived at the Tuilleries, with his family, the assembly declared that they could not remain separate from the person of the king; they came to establish themselves at Paris the 19th of October 1789; and the good people imagined these translations would be a pledge of their safety.

The first act of the king at Paris was, his acceptance of the first articles of the constitution, and his sanction given to the rights of man.

These memoirs are not the history of the revolution. You will read it elsewhere, my children, and you will see from this era, the 19th of October, the sequel of so many memorable events, which

might all have been easily foreseen after the first success of a conquering party;—the property of the clergy declared national on the 2d of November; the creation of the assignats on the 21st of December; the form of this money, and the quantity to be issued, on the 17th of April 1790; nobility, and all titles abolished, on the 19th of June following; the flight of the king, on the 21st of June 1791; his return to Paris on the 25th; lastly, the acceptance of the whole constitution by the king, on the 3d of December, and the promulgation of this act on the 28th of the same month.

Here terminated the sitting of the constituent assembly: and then it was that I lost that friend, who, in the labours and dangers of a public assembly, had so amply fulfilled his duty and my hopes. The Abbé Maury, a man of the most singular ability, and of no less courage, had just been called to Rome, in order to be loaded with honours.

When I talked to you of him, my

dear children, I only gave you the idea of a good friend, an agreeable man; I must now shew him to you in the character of a public man, and as his enemies themselves could not avoid viewing him. Here he was invariably attached to the principles of justice and humanity; an intrepid defender of the throne and of the altar; contending every day with the Mirabeaus and Barnaves; assailed with clamorous threats by the people from the galleries; exposed to their insults and daggers without, and certain that the principles, for which he contended, would sink under the weight of numbers; yet, though every day repulsed, he was every day under arms; nor did the certainty of being overcome, the danger of being stoned, the clamours, the insults of a frenzied populace, ever discourage or weary him out. He laughed at the threats of the mob; he answered with a jest, or a vigorous reproof, to the invectives from the galleries, and returned to his adversaries

with a coolness which nothing could disturb. The arrangement of his speeches, which were almost all extemporaneous, and lasted for whole hours; the connection of his ideas, the clearness of his reasonings, his uninterrupted flow of correct and harmonious expression, made it hardly possible to believe that his eloquence was not studied and prepared; yet the promptitude with which he darted up and laid hold of an opportunity of speaking, compelled us to believe that he spoke without preparation.

I myself have, more than once, seen him dictate from memory the speech that he had pronounced the evening before, complaining, that in his recollection its vigour was weakened and its warmth extinguished. 'Nothing,' said he, 'can render us so eloquent as the glow inspired by a public assembly.' This phenomenon, of which we have seen so few instances, can be explained only by the prodigious extent of his memory, which comprehended every thing, and by the

immense range of his study; indeed, besides that magazine of knowledge and of ideas, which Cicero regarded as the arsenal of the orator, Maury possessed a very general acquaintance with oratorical language; an inestimable advantage, which he had derived from the pulpit.

With regard to the firmness of his courage, it was founded on that contempt for death and that indifference for life, without which, he used to say, a nation cannot have good representatives any more than good soldiers.

Such was the appearance made by the man who has been, who is, and who always will be my friend. No revolution, either in his fortune or mine, will cause any change in this mutual and lasting friendship.

The moment in which we embraced and took leave of each other, perhaps for the last time, had something of a religious and melancholy sadness. 'My friend,' said he, 'I have done what I

could to defend the good cause; I have exhausted my strength, not to distinguish myself in an assembly where I was heard in vain, but in order to plant deep the ideas of justice and truth in the minds of the nation and of all Europe. I have even been ambitious of being heard by posterity. My heart is rent at the thought of leaving my country and my friends; but I carry with me the firm hope, that the revolutionary power will be destroyed.'

I admired this indefatigable perseverance in my friend; but, after having seen him struggle in vain against that force, which swept along or overthrew every thing that opposed its rapid progress, I retained little hope of living long enough to see the end of our misfortunes.

The legislative assembly, which was opened on the 1st of October 1791, imitated, and even exceeded the spirit of the constituent assembly. I shall only

give a few dates, and then come to what relates to myself.

On the 29th of November the king is called upon by a decree, to demand that the princes of the empire should not allow any armaments to be made by the fugitive princes.

On the 14th of December the king pronounces an applauded speech upon his declaration to these princes.

On the 1st of January 1792, a decree of accusation is passed against the brothers of Lewis XVI.

On the 1st of March, the death of the emperor Leopold.

On the 29th of May, the assassination of Gustavus III, king of Sweden.

On the 20th of April, a declaration of war by France against the new king of Hungary and Bohemia.

In the month of June the king refuses his sanction to two decrees; and this affords a pretence for the insurrection

of the suburbs, who are sent in a tumultuous mass to the Tuilleries.

The king, who hears them threatening with savage cries and horrible imprecations, to break open the doors of his apartment, orders these doors to be opened. He appears, and calmly listens to their petition. They require that he should sanction the decrees to which he had refused his acceptance. 'My sanction,' replied the king, 'must be free; nor is this the time either to solicit or obtain it.'

Two days after, in his proclamation against this act of violence, he declared, that there should never be any necessity for extorting his consent to what he believed to be just and advantageous to the public good; but that he would risk, if necessary, his tranquillity, and even his safety, in order to do his duty.

This resistance would have imposed a check on popular despotism. The free acceptance of the laws, and the right

which the king had retained of suspending those which he should not approve, were fundamental articles in a limited monarchy, and in the oath which had been freely given throughout the whole kingdom to the nation, to the law, and to the king; but that alone would have stopped the progress of the revolution, and the faction wished no limits to be set to their power.

The 31st of July was distinguished by the arrival of the Marseillais at Paris; a kind of satellites, whom they kept by them at command, for great occasions.

On the 3d of August Petion presents the assembly with a petition from the sections of Paris, for the deposition of the king.

On the 6th, a report is spread at the Tuilleries, that the king is attempting to fly.

Then it was that, from a too faithful presentiment of what was to happen, my wife urged me to leave that country house, of which she had been so fond,

and to seek, at a distance from Paris, an obscure retreat, where we might breathe in peace.

We knew not where to turn our steps. Our children's tutor determined our irresolution. He assured us, that in his native province of Normandy, we should find, without difficulty, a secure and peaceful asylum. But time was necessary in order to procure it; and we arrived at Evreux without knowing, as yet, where to rest our heads. The master of the inn at which we alighted, had a very neat house near the city, in the hamlet of Saint-Germain, situated on the banks of the Iton, and at the gate of the gardens de Navarre. He offered it to us. Delighted with this situation, we made it our temporary abode, till the family of Charpentier should find us a suitable residence nearer his native place.

If any situation could be delightful in such a painful state of our minds, this would have been so. But, scarce

were we arrived at Evreux, when we learned the horrible event of the 10th of August.

At Paris, by break of day, of that day which was to usher in others so fatal, the squares and streets adjacent to the Tuilleries were filled by armed men, with a train of artillery. They were the populace of the suburbs, supported by the band of Marseillais, who came for the purpose of besieging the king in his palace.

That unhappy prince was defended only by a small number of Swiss guards; and though it has been said, that there were a multitude of brave men in the garden of the Tuilleries, who would have stationed themselves round his person, had he chosen to appear, doubtless he did not think resistance either lawful or possible; he was advised to go with his family into the bosom of the national assembly; there he took refuge.

Meanwhile, his brave Swiss soldiers, who, faithful to their orders, were op-

posing the entrance of the populace into the courts of the palace, found themselves obliged to fire. They had repelled them, and were keeping firm to their post, when they learned that the king had withdrawn. They then lost courage, and having dispersed, were almost all massacred in Paris.

The king was removed, and shut up with his wife, his children, and his sister, in the prison of the Temple (the 13th of August.)

On the 31st of August, the mayor and *procureur syndic* (Petion and Manuel), appeared before the assembly at the head of a deputation, in whose name, Tallien, their orator, declared, that they had shut up a number of factious priests; of whose presence the soil of liberty should, in a few days, be purged.

On the 2d of September, at the convent of the Carmelites in the Luxembourg; at the seminary of Saint-Firmin, in the street of Saint-Victor; and at the abbey Saint-

Germain-des-Pres, many prelates, and a great number of priests, were slaughtered. The carnage lasted till the 6th in the hotel de la Force.

On the 8th, the prisoners who had been sent from Orleans to Versailles were massacred there.

During these days of terror, a man, whom I did not at first recollect, came and lodged near us in the hamlet of Saint-Germain. His disguise made it so difficult for me to remember where I had seen him, that he was obliged to tell me his name. It was Lorry, the bishop of Angers. Our recognition of each other was rendered affecting by his unfortunate situation, which, however, he supported with considerable fortitude.

At his desire we lived together, and had a common table; indeed, during a happier period, this accidental connection would have been mutually agreeable. We were lodged together on the banks of a beau-

tiful river, in the finest season of the year, with enchanting gardens and a magnificent forest to walk in. Our opinions, our tastes, our principles, were perfectly in unison; the recollection of a world, in which we had lived, supplied us with inexhaustible subjects of conversation; but all these pleasures were poisoned by the afflictions with which we were continually overwhelmed.

On the 21st of September the convention took the place of the legislative body. Their first decree was, the abolition of royalty.

Meanwhile, columns of volunteers flew to arms in the name of republican liberty; we were on their way, and our repose was troubled by them. Besides, the approach of winter rendered the place, where we were, moist and unhealthy; we were obliged to quit it, and, not without regret, left the good bishop. My wife and I retired to Couvicourt.

On the 11th of December the king appeared at the bar of the convention, and underwent an examination. He demanded two advocates, Tronchet and Target, as his counsel.

Target refused to undertake these venerable functions; the virtuous Malesherbes zealously offered to supply his place; he was allowed to do so.

Tronchet and Malesherbes asked permission to take, as their associate, the feeling and worthy De Seze; and this too was allowed.

On the 26th, the king appeared, for the second time, with his three defenders. De Seze spoke, but the king had forbid him to use any parade of eloquence. The obedience of De Seze made him only the more affecting.

On the 17th of January 1793, the punishment of death was decreed, with a majority of 366 votes against 355.

The king appealed to the nation. The appeal was rejected.

On the 19th, it was determined by a

majority, 380 votes against 310, that the execution of the sentence should not be delayed; and, on the 21st, Louis XVI was beheaded in the square of Louis XV.

His confessor, at the foot of the scaffold, said to him these ever memorable words—'*Son of Saint Louis, ascend to heaven.*'

The king wished to speak to the people from the scaffold: Santerre, who commanded the execution, and was one of those who raised disturbances in the suburb of Saint-Antony, ordered the drums to beat, that his voice might not be heard.

This execution was followed, soon after, by that of the three other prisoners in the Temple. On the 21st of January the king had perished on the scaffold. On the 16th of October the queen experienced the same fate. On the 21st of Floreal, in the following year, Elizabeth, the king's sister, ter-

minated her innocent life under the same axe; and, on the 20th of Prairial, the same year, the dauphin died at the Temple.

BOOK XIX.

THE French revolution might have found, in ancient Rome, an honourable example to follow. Lewis XVI had none of the vices of the Tarquins, and could not be accused of pride or violence; France, for no other reason than that of being weary of its kings, might have banished them and their whole race.

But, on the 21st of January, the reign of terror began, and could not but begin.

The vast, the infernal project seemed to have been formed, of corrupting the whole mass of the people, of combining together all vices and crimes, of propagating immorality by law, and of realizing, in the general depravity, every

thing which is ascribed to the darkest geniuses of human kind.

Religious opinions, the belief of a God, the idea of a life to come, might check man in his career of guilt; children might be restrained by the authority of their fathers; morality, by principles of humanity, justice, and generosity, might regenerate a corrupted race. The scheme of seduction was formed to embrace all these objects. We heard proclamations in favour of unbelief and blasphemy; we saw libertinism affecting contempt for God, sacrilege insulting his altars, and guilt rendered daring by the hope of annihilation; we saw all the ties of subordination which nature had formed, broken; children, being rendered by law independent of their fathers, had only to wish their death in order to be certain, even against their consent, of sharing their spoils. The conjugal tie still remained, as a means of handing down domestic virtues, and of uniting a married couple

with themselves and with their children: this tie was allowed to be broken at will; marriage became only a legal prostitution, a transient connection, which libertinism, caprice, and inconstancy might form and dissolve at pleasure. In short, honour, public faith, respect for themselves and for public opinion, the veneration inspired by the sacred image of virtue, still presented a point of union for minds susceptible of the emotions of repentance, and of the impressions of good example. This was all destroyed. Impudence, licentiousness, and the most abandoned profligacy, were set up as maxims of republican conduct; and the system of Mirabeau and the duke of Orleans, the system of spreading depravity through a whole generation, seemed to reign in France. Thus was formed that revolutionary despotism, that colossus of mire, kneaded and cemented with blood.

Confined as we were in our cottage of Abloville, to which we had gone after

leaving Couvicourt, we could not but dread the effect of so corrupted an age upon our children; and we employed every care in fortifying them by a salutary and cautious education, when the almost sudden death of their faithful instructor added to our sorrows a domestic affliction, which completely overwhelmed us. A putrid fever, of extreme malignity, deprived us of this excellent young man. Our children must recollect the grief we felt at losing him, and our fear at seeing them exposed to the contagion of an alarming malady.

Their mother and I knew not what was to become of us, and our last resource was to seek refuge in some inn at Vernon, when some one suggested the idea of asking a retreat from a venerable old man, who lived in the village of Aubevoie, at a small distance from ours, and had a house large enough to accommodate us all without inconvenience. There is something romantic in this occurrence of my life.

The old man was affected by our situation, and gave us a most cordial reception. He was one of the monks who had been expelled from the neighbouring convent of Carthusians. His name was Dom Honorat. He was older than I. His character reminded us of the hermits of the Thebais. This virtuous man seemed to be sent by heaven to instruct and console us. His whole manner breathed piety; but a mild, indulgent, charitable piety, a truly evangelical piety. He seldom allowed himself to dine with us; but, for an hour after dinner, and for a little longer in the evening, he came and talked to us of those great objects on which his mind dwelt without ceasing, of divine providence, of the immortality of the soul, of the life to come, of the morality of the Gospel; and all this flowed spontaneously and naturally from the bottom of his heart, with an affecting warmth and lively conviction. It would have been

cruel to express any doubt on subjects which formed the consolation of his age and solitude. The soul of this good old man was constantly in heaven; and it was equally pleasing to us to ascend along with him, as it would have been inhuman to attempt bringing him down. He raised us from the dejection into which the death of the king had sunk us; and, repeating the words of the confessor—'*Son of Saint Louis ascend to heaven,*' he said, with confidence: 'Yes, he is now before God; and I am sure he is imploring forgiveness for his enemies.' He thought the same of the virtuous martyrs who died on the 2^{d} of September.

The comfort which a pious hermit might derive from his intercourse with us, vexed the mayor of Aubevoie. At the end of eighteen days he gave me to understand, that it would be time for us to withdraw. Luckily, the air of our house was purified; and, after having

suitably expressed our gratitude to him who had given us so kind a reception, we returned to our own fire-side.

This humble and moderate abode was my own ; I had purchased it : but what a decline did it mark of our former fortune. I had just left, near Paris, a country-house, which was our delight ; a garden, where every thing was in plenty : and this smiling abode was now, as by the stroke of a wand, changed into a very small and decayed cottage. There it was that we must attempt to suit ourselves to our situation, and, if possible, to live as respectably in poverty as we had done in abundance. The experiment was painful : my literary appointments were suppressed : the French academy was on the point of being destroyed ;* the literary pension, which had been the fruit of my labours, was no longer of any value. The only solid property which I retained, was a small farm at Paray, which the prudent foresight of my wife had induced me to pur-

* It was so on the 10th of August 1793.

chase. I had been obliged to give up my carriage, and dismiss even the servant who was necessary to my old age. But, amid these privations, which scarcely left us the necessaries of life, my wife judiciously and skilfully lessened our expence, by rendering our wants more simple; and, I can truly say, that our own uncomfortable situation feebly affected us, in comparison with the public calamity. The attention which I bestowed on the instruction of my children, the tender interest which their mother took in their moral education, and, if I may be allowed to say it, the natural goodness of their character supplied us, in our solitude, with an inexpressible resource. They consoled us under a misfortune which was not the misfortune of their age. We took care, at least, not to distress them with it. 'The storm,' said we, 'passes over their head, and smiles upon them; and we have the hope that their day may be more calm and serene.'

But the storm continued to increase: we saw it extend over the whole nation; it was not a civil war, for one of the two parties was disarmed and submissive; but, on one side, it was a jealous hatred, and, on the other, a gloomy terror.

Millions of men who were to be paid in the armies, a number of other enormous expences, absorbed infinitely more wealth than could be furnished by the public contributions, or by selling the property of the clergy and emigrants. Paper money, issued in millions, destroyed itself; its accelerated downfal carried credit along with it. Commerce was ruined. The resources supplied by war from the conquered countries were not sufficient. It was decreed,* that the property of condemned persons should belong to the republic; and this they called coining money with the guillotine, upon that square *de la Revolution*, which was made to overflow with blood.

On this account riches became a cause

* March 10, 1793.

of proscription, and not only men distinguished by their merit, such as Malesherbes, Nicolaï, Gilbert-de-Voisin; but those noted for wealth, such as Magon, Laborde, Duruey, Serilly, and a multitude of farmers-general, were put to death. Accordingly, when the old Magon was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and was asked his name: 'I am rich,' replied he; he did not deign to say more.

In order to give more latitude to the tables of proscription, the accused were distinguished by vague appellations of enemies to the people enemies to liberty, enemies to the revolution, and, lastly, by the name of *suspicious* persons; and all those were accounted suspicious whose conduct, whose connections, or whose conversation, shewed them to be partizans of tyranny (that is, of royalty), or enemies to the republic, and, in general, those to whom certificates of civism had been refused. Now it was lawful to refuse these certificates without as-

signing any reason;* it was lawful also to accuse and condemn without proof. In a decree, which subjects to capital punishment *the enemies of the people* (22 Prairial, year 2), it was said: 'Those are accounted such who endeavour to destroy liberty by force or by fraud; to degrade the national convention and the revolutionary government, of which it is the centre; to mislead public opinion, and to prevent the instruction of the people; in short, to stain the purity of revolutionary principles.' 'The proof necessary to condemn them,' continued this decree, 'shall be every kind of document, material or moral, which may naturally command the assent of a sound and reasonable mind. The rule of judgment is the conscience of juries, enlightened by the love of their country. Their object is the triumph of their country, and the ruin of its enemies. If there exist documents

* Decree of January 30, 1793.

of the above-mentioned nature, no witnesses need be heard.'

By means of this ambiguous and treacherous language, did an hypocritical quackery establish a system of arbitrary procedure in our criminal tribunals. No proofs, no witnesses, but merely the conscience of juries—And what juries were these? Organs and substitutes of Robespierre, of Lebon, of Carrier, of Francastel, and of so many other tigers, insatiable for human blood.

One of the itinerant executioners of the faction had caused a guillotine to be engraved as an emblem on his seal. Another had one on his table at dinner, with which he amused himself in cutting off the head of the chicken which had been served up to him; and whilst these sported with the instrument of their inhumanity, others boasted to the convention of the speedy and economical manner in which they executed its decrees. One of them wrote—'Shooting is too tedious, and it wastes powder and

ball. We have fallen upon the plan of putting them (the prisoners) in large boats into the river; at a mile from the city we sink the boat. Saint-Florent, and the other places,' continued he, 'are full of prisoners, which shall also receive the civic baptism.' I need not describe the inexpressible horror which we felt at these cannibal jests. Things which made humanity shudder, the *noyades* of Carrier upon the Loire, the cannonades of Collot-d'Herbois at Lyons, obtained honourable mention in the bulletin. The atrocities of Lebon in the Pas-de-Calais were *rather harsh proceedings*, which must just be winked at—and which were winked at!

A formidable party was suddenly formed against Robespierre, in the heart of the convention; on the 9th Thermidor Tallien publicly accused him. He was instantly outlawed, surprised, torn from the hotel de Ville, in which he had taken refuge, and dragged, on the 10th, to that

scaffold on which he made so many innocent men perish.

After the death of Robespierre, the committees, the revolutionary tribunal, were changed, and the convention disowned their former cruelty; but, they declared,* that they would receive no appeal from the judgments given by the criminal tribunals, and executed during the revolution, by which property had been confiscated for the advantage of the republic.

Meanwhile, the fermentation of men's minds was not at an end. The society of the Jacobins did not forget that they had been omnipotent; they saw themselves kept at a distance, and could not endure that the anarchical power, which was their own bloody work, should be usurped by a party different from their own. In vain were they checked in the gentlest manner; they felt the rein, and gnawed it in silence. Attempts were made to weaken by purifying them; and the com-

* 22 Frimaire, year 3.

mittees were instructed to unite in suggesting the mode of this purification.* All correspondence, all connection between the popular assemblies was prohibited.† But the fire was slowly burning under the ashes, and it was yet a vain attempt to prevent it from spreading.

The convention defended itself against public accusations by a decree, regulating the manner in which the trial of a member should be conducted;‡ but this decree was no security in the time of an insurrection; and the tumult began to threaten around the hall of the Jacobins.§ Orders were given to shut that hall; and this decree was sent to the armies and popular societies.‖ The movements of the people in the centre of Paris, and in the suburbs of Saint-Antony, became only the more furious.

In order to strengthen the party which opposed the Jacobin combination, the

* 13 Vendemiaire. † 25 Id.
‡ 8 Brumaire. § 19 Id. ‖ 20 Id.

sixty-six deputies who had been arrested on the 3d of October 1793, were again admitted into the convention on the 18th of Frimaire; and three of the old terrorists being found guilty of the enormities which they committed at Nantes, were condemned to death. A prosecution was raised against Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser, and he was condemned, with fifteen of his accomplices. At the same time Collot-d'Herbois, Barrere, and Billaud-Varenne, were brought to trial.

At last, the whole convention entered into an oath to prosecute to death all the followers of Robespierre.

The Jacobins seemed at the last extremity. Some young persons, who had met in the garden of the *palais-royal*, had burned an effigy in the costume of jacobinism, and had carried the ashes into the sewer of Montmatre, with this inscription on the funeral urn—'The pantheon of the Jacobins of the 9th Thermidor.'

Yet, so little was the assembly at ...se, that amid all these acts of vigour, it continued still to hold out a signal of alarm and distress. For such I call the decree, in which, providing for the event of its dissolution, it decreed that, if that should happen, all the representatives who might be able to escape the murderous sword, should meet, as soon as possible, at Chalons, on the Marne. The event proved their apprehensions to have been well founded.

On the 1st Prairial, women of the populace having broke open the doors of the assembly-hall, with cries and insults, which interrupted the deliberations, crowds of men instantly rushed in along with them, and the head of one of the deputies was laid upon the table. All was over if the people had taken advantage of the momentary terror which they had struck. But the insurgents began to amuse themselves with seizing upon the seats which had been left vacant; and one of them, called Romme, was so

impudently vain, as to seat himself on the president's elbow-chair, and lose time in pronouncing decrees. By these decrees, he ordained, that the members of the committees appointed by the present government should be arrested; that all those imprisoned since the 9th Thermidor should be enlarged; that Barrere, Billaud de Varenne, and Collot d'Herbois, should be recalled. This silly ostentation of authority lulled asleep the rage of the people; and while he was giving laws, one of the deputies entered the hall at the head of an armed force, dispersed the multitude, and restored courage and freedom to the assembly.

From that time the blood of the terrorists began to flow in torrents; and the movers of popular sedition were executed in presence of the people.

Armed force was thus the sole arbiter between despotism and anarchy, and the leaders of the conquered party were destined to perish on the scaffold.

This was but a melancholy spectacle

to the virtuous part of the nation, who dreaded equally anarchy and despotism.

Men felt, at length, the necessity of altering, not the fundamental principles, but the form of a government, which, though republican in name, was, in reality, despotic. They pretended to divide the powers, in order to balance them. Such was the object and the art of the new constitution. In this shadow of fundamental laws, which a commission was instructed to form, and which they presented on the 3d Messidor of the year 3, two legislative councils, and an executive directory, composed the body in which the national power was to be lodged.

The two councils, consisting, the one of five hundred, and the other of two hundred and fifty deputies, chosen every year by a majority of votes in the electoral assemblies, were invested with the power, one of proposing, and the other of accepting, of sanctioning, or of refusing the laws; being designed to regu-

late and moderate that in which every thing was to originate. So far the public interest, provided elections were free and judicious, might be in good hands.

But to these two councils was added a directory, armed with the executive power for the maintenance of order and law; and thus was established a despotism, absolute and tyrannical beyond any former example.

The five members who composed the directory were to be taken out of the number of fifty candidates, who should be proposed by the council of five hundred; and the choice was to rest with the council of two hundred and fifty, called the council of ancients.

These pentarchs were to go out by rotation; first, one was to go out every year, and his place to be supplied by lot; and afterwards each was to continue in office till the end of his five years, when they were to go out in the order of succession.

Thence it happened, as we may observe by the way, that able men were no way urgent to be in the number of those first elected, whom the lot might remove at the end of a year or two, and who, besides, would run the risk attendant upon a first experiment.

But all had a right to aim at these eminent dignities of the state, and might pass through them more than once. Accordingly, their first care had been to fill up the commission for drawing up the constitutional act, with the most ardent, the most able, the most ambitious republicans; and these had laboured to bestow on this rolling oligarchy, the greatest possible degree of strength and authority.

The conduct of the greatest affairs of the state, political interests, the finances, foreign relations, commerce and alliances, war and peace, the formation and management of armies, the appointment and dismissal of generals, the nomination to all military employments, were exclusively

vested in this council of five. In the conduct of internal affairs, they had the police, the use of the armed force, the right of inspection over the treasury, and over those employed in the collection of taxes, the management of the public money, without the least responsibility, the choice of ministers, who acted under their orders, and were removeable at their pleasure, the superintendance of the tribunals, the immediate command of the constituted authorities, and of the agents whom they should employ in all the departments of administration; in short, the right of having legal commissaries in all departments, even the smallest, and of annulling the elections of magistrates and judges which the people should have made. Such were the prerogatives lavished upon the directory by the constitutional act, without including those which were afterwards added.

Thus all the means of governing, of intimidating, and of corrupting; the use

of the armed force; the disposal of the national treasure; the interest which those employed in the armies, in the finances, in all lucrative employments, would have to gain the favour of these omnipotent pentarchs; the devotion of the generals to the authors of their fortune; the example which they would set to the soldiers and subalterns; the fear of being deposed, and the desire of being continued, which would be felt by the popular magistrates; the ambition which would reign in the national assembly of gaining the favour of those who promoted to great offices, and who held in their hands reward and punishment, according as they should have been well or ill served: all these things, I say, bestowed upon the directory a power, before which the councils were reduced to nothing.

But, it was necessary, in the first place, that the constitution should be accepted; and the people might discover that they were proposing to them only a

tyranny, ably disguised and skilfully organized: it was necessary, besides, to take care that no change should happen in the spirit of the assembly which was to be formed by the approaching elections; and for this they provided in the most daring manner.

BOOK XX.

THE events, of which I have just recalled the memory, have wholly occupied my thoughts; and, amidst so many public calamities, I have almost forgotten myself. The impression made upon me by seeing this multitude of sufferers, was so strong, and so deep, as to make it natural that what affected myself only should often escape unnoticed. Still, however, I endeavoured, by composition and study, to keep off those painful reflections, the continuance of which might have led to a gloomy melancholy, or to a state of mind, in which the ideas, always rivetted upon one object, produce still more dangerous effects

upon the frail and feeble organ of good sense.

As long as my imagination could amuse me with agreeable reveries, I composed new tales, less gay than those which I had written during the happy days of my life, and the smiling leisure of prosperity; but somewhat more philosophical, and in a tone better suited to my age, and to the circumstances of the time.

When these reveries failed, I called my reason into exercise, and endeavoured to employ better the time of my retreat and solitude, by composing, for the instruction of my children, a course of elementary study, in little treatises on *Grammar*, *Logic*, *Metaphysics*, and *Morality*; in which I carefully collected the substance of what I had read on these various subjects, in order that they might reap the fruits.

Sometimes, in order to amuse and instruct them by means of example, I employed our winter evenings in telling

them little adventures which happened to me in my youth; and my wife, perceiving that they were interested by these narratives, urged me to write out for them the events of my life.

In this manner I was led to write these volumes of my memoirs. I must own, like Madame de Staal, that I have drawn a bust only of myself; but I was writing for my children.

These recollections were a real consolation to me, because they effaced, for the moment at least, the gloomy images of the present by the pleasing reveries of the past.

I am now come to the period when public affairs took a stronger and closer hold of me than ever. In my capacity of citizen I was called to the primary assembly, in the canton of Gaillon, in which the new constitution was to be proposed. This was the time to observe the state of the national disposition, and it was an interesting time; for the question was to be proposed and determined

by a majority of votes in all the primary assemblies at once.

In that where I was present, it was evident, that two parties were equally balanced.

Here concludes the manuscript of the *Memoirs of Marmontel.* We have seen, in the eighteenth and nineteenth books of this work, that, on the approach of the 10th of August 1792, he had retired first into the neighbourhood of Evreux, in the department of l'Eure, and then to Abloville, a small village near Gaillon, where he had procured a little cottage and small garden.

There he devoted his whole attention to the education of his children, to some literary works for their instruction, and to a few historical pieces.

He continued to devote himself to these pleasing occupations till the month of April 1797 (Germinal, year 5), an era at which those electoral assemblies

were held, by which, according to the regulations of the third constitution, a third part of the national assembly was to be renewed. He went to Evreux, and was unanimously elected by his department, who expressly charged him to defend, in the national assembly, the cause of the catholic religion, an engagement which he undertook and fulfilled, by pronouncing before the legislative body the discourse which will be found annexed.

Being then a member of the council of ancients, he returned to Paris, and lived there, fulfilling his functions, and connected with all the most distinguished characters in the two sections of the legislative body, till the 18th Fructidor, year 5, when the department of l'Eure, being one of those of which the elections were declared null, he took refuge anew in his rural retreat, and thus escaped the deportation to which most of his friends fell victims.

He there put the last hand to some works, which will appear in succession.

Towards the close of the year 1799, he was struck with apoplexy, as he was preparing to go and spend some weeks at Rouen. Notwithstanding the care of his wife, and all the aid of medicine, he could not recover his speech, and seemed also to have lost his recollection. He died on the 31st of December. He had been born on the 11th July 1723.

He was interred in his garden by ministers of the catholic religion.

He left a widow and three sons, with scarcely any fortune, though he had spent his whole life in literary labours, and had published works which have become classical; such as his *Elements of Literature*; to which we shall, doubtless, have occasion to add his *Elements of Grammar*, of *Logic*, of *Metaphysics*, and of *Morality*; which his friends intend to publish immediately.

OPINION OF MARMONTEL UPON THE FREEDOM OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

REPRESENTATIVES of the people,—if the resolution which is proposed to you were only a result of the principle established by the constitutional act, nothing could be more just. Certainly, every one should be at liberty to exercise that form of religion which he has chosen, so long as he respects public order, and does not violate the laws. The rule is the same for all, and attaches to their liberty only one equal and necessary condition; but when we restrain, by prohibitory laws, this principle of liberty and equality, do we not impair it; and is the necessity for this restriction so great as to render it just? It is upon this subject that opinions are divided.

I do not enter the lists with the arms of eloquence: its vehemence, its force, its energy, no longer belong to my age. But I can still employ the language of feeling and truth.

In order to reduce the question which is submitted to you, to its most precise and simple terms, I shall distinguish, in religious worship, between thought and action. In religion the thoughts possess an absolute liberty, because they belong to man, considered as an individual, and as connected with God alone. But action possesses only a constitutional and limited liberty, because it belongs not only to the individual, but to the social order for which he is responsible.

In this view, moral action, in general, is dependent on human laws. But, in what degree are human laws entitled to restrain it? This is the grand question, and I find it determined in the second article of the rights of man. It is there said: *Liberty consists in being able to do*

whatever does not injure the rights of others. Now, what are the rights of others in the social compact? Liberty, property, security to each individual, and tranquillity to all. Whatever is innocent, in these respects, ought, therefore, to be allowed; and every restriction imposed upon this freedom of action is unjust.

Let us apply this principle to the free exercise of public worship, and let us see how far, in respect to it, the precautions of police, the measures of security, ought to extend. I remark, in the first place, that these precautions wear a character of inquietude, of mistrust, of suspicion, and, perhaps, even of secret aversion, and repugnance to allow what they would wish to prevent, but dare not prohibit.

Our politicians treat religion like a jealous rival, whom they are forced to treat with courtesy, but would wish to weaken; a behaviour, which appears to me unworthy of a powerful and su-

preme system of legislation, the character of which ought to be grandeur and majesty.

I shall observe besides, that our prohibitory laws, these hostile dispositions, are not equally levelled against every form of worship, and that, to speak openly, they have one only in view. For instance, the prohibition of external ceremonies can be aimed at no worship except the catholic. Philosophical deism has not even temples: it is a pure contemplation, a mental, solitary, silent adoration.

Oriental deism has temples, assemblies, and public solemnities; but it was not, probably, the religion of Confucius, nor that of Mahomet, nor even that of Moses, expressly, against which our laws are designed to operate.

Neither is it polytheism, nor the ceremonies of Ceres, or Cybele, whose celebration they are afraid of seeing. Let us speak plainly: our prohibitory laws cannot even have in view Christianity in

general, but the catholic religion alone; for it alone has ceremonies and signs out of its temples; it alone obliges its ministers to wear always a particular dress. No other sect has any thing of that external appearance, which is prohibited by our laws.

The apparent equality which is presented by a vague prohibition common to every kind of worship, is therefore only a vain formula; and the prohibition of external signs and ceremonies falls, in reality, upon the catholic religion alone. It is the catholic religion, therefore, that was supposed dangerous, when it was thought proper to guard against the enterprizes which might be made by the ministers of religion, against the civil condition of the citizens, to borrow the express words of the law of the 7th Vendemiaire.

Let me, therefore, be allowed to examine this policy, so hostile to the catholic religion, and to ask, not as a zealot, but as a legislator, without any

partiality, or any ostentation of my private sentiments, what causes of suspicion peculiar to this religion, or to its ministers, have given rise to such scrupulous and severe precautions?

If, in the catholic religion as in idolatry, the objects of worship had been passions, vices, and crimes, exalted into deities, doubtless we ought to abolish, or, at least, confine these licentious images.

But what can be scandalous or hurtful in the symbols of the most modest, the mildest virtues? What alarm can be given, either to morals or to laws, by examples of humility, of patience, of indulgence, of self-denial, of universal beneficence?

In particular, what is the symbol which catholics are to be prevented from holding up in their solemnities and funerals? The symbol of their faith and hope, their pledge of immortality, the sign of the love of God, and of his having devoted himself for the salvation of men.

Ah! suppose that this mysterious symbol, the object of veneration to so many men distinguished by genius and understanding, is regarded with contempt by men who pre end to be more wise and enlightened; freedom of thought allows this; but, let these very men tell us, what injury the world can sustain, although upon the front of a temple, upon the coffin of a Christian, or upon the tomb of a just man, who has died the victim of the wicked, there be engraved the image of him whose last sigh asked of his father, the forgiveness of his enemies? What danger is there in that symbol of peace, at a time when the spirit of conciliation and concord is so necessary? at a time, when the only hope of rest and of public safety is founded, perhaps, on the oblivion of crimes, and the forgiveness of injuries.

Ought you, in particular, ye guilty men! whom the mercy of our laws per-

mits to live,—wretches who would have no refuge but annihilation, if mercy were banished from heaven and earth; ought you to reject the worship of a God who forgives and teaches forgiveness? Ah! rather seek to find everywhere this merciful religion; believe in a redeeming God; this is your only hope. By what other expiation could you quiet your remorse? And what other victim would wash in its blood, the blood with which you are covered?

A superstitious belief! say the sceptics, insulting the most sublime example of the most heroic of all virtues.

Well, suppose that the belief of the Chrysostoms, the St. Ambroses, the St. Augustins, the Newtons, the Pascals, the Bossuets; suppose, if you will, that it is all folly; for we are not now handling a theological controversy, nor am I defending the truth of this religion: I speak of its innocence, and I ask, which of its symbols it would be

dangerous to present to the public eye; especially after they have been accustomed to them during so many ages?

"This, it is said, would be a distinction in favour of the catholic religion, and the law wishes none. If, by distinction, you mean only a visible difference, it will be vain to propose that there shall be none between different religions; their temples will be opened, and the rites, the songs, the public prayers will sufficiently distinguish them. If, by distinction, you mean any prerogative, the catholic religion will have none; for all religions will be allowed equally with it to have their exterior symbols and signs. This is a visible and solemn profession of faith, which every one will be allowed to make, and which no one will be allowed to insult. The crescent, the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, will all be openly displayed, and from civil equality, order and peace will result.

But, the signs of a belief which they

no longer choose should be the reigning one, produce a stronger impression upon the senses, which increases its power over men's minds. Yes, this is the motive of those severe laws with which it has been supposed necessary to restrain the catholic religion. Its solemnities, its duties, the pomp of its holidays, the commanding aspect of its mysteries, even its rural processions, which seem to render the blessings of heaven more abundant, when the voice of the labourers in the fields calls them down upon the harvest; and, above all, the consolations which religion affords to nature in the accidents of life, to the sick, the dying, in the pangs of suffering, in the last agonies; all this, I say, has been thought to have too powerful an influence on the mind and soul. This religion has been treated like a tree, whose spacious shade is dreaded, and of which, one attacks the root, and another breaks the branches. In the same manner men have vied with each other, some in extirpating the ca-

tholic religion, others in stripping it of whatever seemed likely to extend its influence; and, it must be allowed, that upon the depraved system which had been conceived, this measure was prudent. The scheme of a policy, which should be destructive of all morality, could not be better contrived; our corrupters have been consistent.

It was well known that the catholic religion consisted in the profession of all those maxims which they wished to make us abjure; that it was the friend of all the virtues which they wished to banish, and the enemy of all the vices which they wished licentiousness and impiety to engender.

It was well known also, that, of all religions, the catholic was the most popular, and the most attractive to that class of men whom they intended to corrupt. Its advantage consists in presenting them with consolatory objects, with friends, who, from the highest heaven, take an interest in their labours,

in their sorrows, in their disgraces; a God, in particular, a God, the example and model of those humble virtues, which the people have need of in their laborious condition, and who has himself suffered so much, in order to teach them to suffer.

Proud minds, doubtless, feel repugnance to all this; but the people have not this unbelieving pride: whatever affects their heart takes easy possession of their understanding. A God, the friend of the unhappy, who wipes away their tears, who listens to their sighs; a God, who supports their courage, and who exalts their hopes; a God, who, after some moments of affliction and suffering, promises them endless felicity and glory: this consoling Deity is felt by them to be too necessary, not to obtain their love and their faith; and more will be made Christians by the desire of believing, than will be made unbelievers by a false philosophy. This was fully understood by those who formed the scheme

of depraving a whole people; they could not banish humanity from men's minds, so long as there should remain any traces of a compassionate and charitable religion; they have erected their scaffolds only on the ruins of the altars.

We need not wonder, therefore, if minds, which are still animated by the ill-extinguished fire of the same passions that have been so fatal to us, should retain an invincible antipathy to a religion which opposes these passions. They wish to find among the people accomplices who resemble themselves. They would think themselves undone, were they to see themselves everywhere surrounded by virtuous men. Peace is their scourge; justice, humanity, whose voice haunts, whose name terrifies them, are like furies in their eyes. Since they have called up hell, and chained it down upon the earth, they have begun to view heaven with horror: or, if, urged by remorse, they have recourse to prayer, the hope of obtaining

forgiveness suddenly fails them; and, like the Macbeth of the English poet, they are forced to exclaim—*I cannot pray.*

There is another class of men weaker and less violent, who, since they dare not propose to banish altogether the catholic religion, wish, at least, that it should be invisible to them. All the deserters from this faith have not divested themselves of it so completely as they pretend. To meet with those religious symbols which their fathers have revered, gives rise to tormenting recollections. They feel a repugnance to recognize, under their modest and simple dress, the ministers of a religion which they have abandoned. These mysterious ceremonies rekindle in their minds a certain involuntary feeling of respect and shame. The very sound of bells through the air, recals them as deserters, accuses them as faithless, and whether it announces a festival or a funeral, is always to them either an

afflicting reproach, or a threatening presage.

Accordingly we have seen, at all times, that the catholic, who has renounced his religion, becomes its most cruel, its most implacable enemy; and we may say of him what, in Athalia, Joad says of Mathan—

'Ce temple l'importune, et son impieté
'Voudroit aneantir le Dieu qu'il a quitté.'

But, after all, according to the principles of good legislation and sound policy, are there not reasons founded upon equity, upon prudence, for preserving all religions in a state of equality, which may prevent any one from becoming too powerful? Nothing, it may be said, can be more prudent than the maintenance of this equality; no regulations can be juster than those which, while, on one side, they repress political fanaticism, on the other, keep within bounds the fanaticism of religion; which even oppose the progress of a too ardent proselytism, and

allow no form of worship to acquire the power of excluding or harassing another. Such, in short, has been the spirit and plan of the prohibitory laws, and particularly of that of *Vendemiaire:*

I do not attack this system; but I lay it down as a principle, that the equality which the laws may justly establish, consists in granting to none of the permitted forms of worship, any privilege, precedence, or prerogative whatever, and not in reducing them to a level in point of natural advantages; for it is with religions as with men: it is not in the power of the laws to prevent an excellent man from obtaining the personal esteem of his fellow-men; from exercising over them the superiority conferred by understanding and virtue, by the influence of beneficence, by the ascendant of genius and the charm of persuasion. In the same manner it ought not to be in the power of the laws to prevent a religion from exercising its empire over thought, from employing the

means which it may possess of gaining over men's minds, provided these means be innocent. The right of placing all religions on a level, is only the right of favouring none whatever.

Nevertheless, if one of them could not be thoroughly free, without becoming really formidable, would it not be a wise policy to provide against such a danger? I agree; I applaud this maxim of prudence; but I observe that most of our revolutionary laws have proceeded upon vague presumptions, jealous suspicions, gloomy mistrust, and chimerical terrors. Nothing is easier than to throw suspicion upon innocence itself; nothing more common than to affect to dread what we wish to render odious. Let us guard, legislators, against every opinion rashly conceived or malignantly inspired. Let us guard against the impressions which the rumours of calumny too often make upon the friends of truth.

Every thing is liable to abuse, even

the best things, and religion itself. But the abuse is made by men, who must answer for themselves individually, and who are all equally under the superintendance of the laws.

Our business then is to examine whether the spirit of the catholic religion authorizes or condemns the evils of which it is accused, the crimes committed in its name; whether it would naturally induce its ministers to commit them, and whether the passions, which raise its standard, do not betray its interests while they affect to serve it.

I shall give a fair statement of the reasons which we are supposed to have for being on our guard against this religion. These reasons follow, with all the force that can be given to them. France, since the time of Clovis, has had a ruling religion, a church exclusively favoured and protected, successively enriched and dignified, and holding the first rank in the state. Now, say they, contemplate its present ruin and decay! Stripped of its

splendour, degraded from all its privileges and all its dignities, deprived of all its riches, how can it not be formidable to those who have robbed it of its all. How can it fail to be the irreconcileable enemy of a constitution, which allows it no establishment, no provision, and which reduces its priests to the necessity of subsisting on private charity? Is it possible that it should not detest a revolution which has profaned, destroyed, and stained its altars with blood; which has banished it from its temples; which has caused its ministers to be proscribed, imprisoned, exiled, slain?—Yes, all this is doubtless calculated to embitter, to exasperate minds abandoned to the impulse of human passions. But these emotions are here opposed by the restraints of a religion which subdues nature, and enjoins the sacrifice of all interests and all resentments; of a religion, which, from its birth, and after the example of its model, has breathed nothing but humility,

patience, mildness, obedience to the laws, peace with men, the most profound submission to the decrees of providence, indulgence and love to enemies, even dread and contempt for earthly prosperity, and the sacrifice of every thing which can gratify avarice and pride; for such is the catholic religion; such has been its character, its unalterable character, since the time when a God (I speak his own language), since a God, *patient even unto death,* was its legislator.

The times, we are told, are changed.

Yes, the times are changed; but religion is not. Amid persecution, and in prosperity, she has remained incorruptible, and her maxims are the same as in the time of Tertullian.

But, if such was the spirit of its early disciples, has it always been that of its pontiffs, of its priests? Is it so still? And if they have been so often animated by ambition, by hatred, by vengeance, what security have we that they will

not be at all times susceptible of these passions.

What would become of us, great God! were we to reason thus on social policy? What would men retain of their natural faculties, if the laws should take away from them the use of all those which they have sometimes, which they have often abused. It is by this system of merciless suspicion, that we have seen the prisons filled with innocent men, the scaffolds loaded, overloaded with victims; and it is well known to have been always the maxim of tyranny to prefer what is safe to what is just, to chain, to oppress all whom it suspects not to be its willing slaves.

But, is this oppressive, is this revolutionary police, still ours? Yes, exclaim the factious, the revolution requires these measures; for it is not finished. It is not finished, indeed, to their wish; and when will it be so, to those who never think that the measure of destruction is full—to those who still call out for

proscriptions and massacres? It is not finished, to ruffians still greedy of plunder and thirsting for blood; in a word, it is not finished to all who enjoy the public calamities, and dread nothing so much as its cessation. But, the revolution is finished, it is fully finished for that great majority of virtuous men, who wished only a legitimate liberty, an equitable government, wisely arranged as to its form, and resting upon good laws. The foundation is laid, the edifice is rising; it is already too firm to be overthrown, or even to be violently shaken.

Thanks to the trial of misfortune, thanks to the return of reason into men's minds, of humanity into their hearts; almost the whole nation demands now only a legislation which may render its rights sacred; and this public and universal wish forms a rampart against faction, under whose shelter liberty rests, guarded by the laws.

Now, when laws are made by a free

and generous people, by a people who wish only to be peaceful and just, their foresight is prudent without being suspicious; their precautions, their watchfulness, presume the commission of no crimes, which may not reasonably be presumed, and in weighing what is probable, in making the uncertain calculation of what is possible, they never confound doubt with certainty, and real facts with the illusions and phantoms of fear.

Without recurring then to ages, of which the annals would bear testimonies so uniformly glorious to the ministers of the Gospel, I ask what has been their spirit and character in our days, in the midst of ourselves, when exposed, under our eyes, to the rudest trials. Is it in dungeons, where they were in a manner heaped together, without respect, without compassion for the aged, for the infirm? Is it in the hold of ships, where, with greater barbarity still, they were left to perish in crowds, shut out from the light, and forced to

breathe only impure vapours and a stagnant air? Is it at Nantes, in vessels which were to bury them in the Loire? Is it at Marseilles, where they were dragged alive and mutilated, on hurdles, to the scaffold? Is it in any of these places, I say, that they have been seen enraged, breathing vengeance, detesting their country, or even impatient under the inhumanity which was practised towards them?

What do I say? Whither am I led by so just a defence? Ah! my colleagues, with reluctance do I speak of those places for ever fatal, in which such multitudes perished. Truth forces me to call to your recollection these abominable massacres; but my design is not to paint their horror. Far from our thoughts be those ferocious murderers, who, with eyes on fire, their mouth foaming with rage, the sword or the axe in their hand, watched for their victims, and demanded prey with the roarings of hungry tigers. Shuddering, let us pass

them over, and turn our eyes to a spectacle worthy of earth and of heaven—to that multitude of injured virtuous men shut up in the prisons of Saint-Firmin, of Carmes, of Saint-Germain-des-Pres. Withdrawn into themselves, bent on their knees, with joined hands, and lifting their eyes to heaven, they implore the mercy of God for themselves, his compassion for their murderers. In vast and deep silence each waits till his name is pronounced; he is called, he rises, he embraces his companions, recommends himself to their prayers, and goes to die like the *Lamb*, without a murmur, a complaint, or a sigh. Is there any thing here of that factious and rebellious spirit, that spirit of vengeance, of hatred, and treachery, of which I hear them accused?

But, do those who survive resemble them?—Will they resemble them? What occasion is there that they should all possess the same degree of heroism? Will their virtue again be

tried by punishment? Are they all destined to be martyrs? Some will be weak, some will feel too sensibly the loss of that property of which they are deprived; others will lament having fallen into indigence. Surely it would be dealing too hardly were we to reproach the unhappy because they consoled themselves by lamentation! But, if they have preserved the spirit of the Gospel, misfortune itself will neither render them revengeful, nor treacherous, nor factious, nor enemies of that authority to which providence subjects them. This is what I affirm, and what no one can deny. On entering into the priesthood, they have sworn to follow the maxims, the example of their divine legislator; and on what grounds can they be presumed capable of a breach of faith, which would amount to apostacy? On what grounds are they supposed to be no longer Christians?

However, do you wish to ascertain if they be Christians at heart? Ask of

hat nation which, ambitious of shewing tself more magnanimous than ours, has so humanely received, so generously succoured and respected them in their misery. Ask in Italy, of those gallant French soldiers whom they served and relieved in the hospitals with such affectionate piety; and believe, at least, he testimony of the warrior who has praised them so loudly.

There is no conspiracy of which they are not suspected, no crime or misfortune of which they are not accused; but without proof, and always in the mass; for no individual is ever named. What! among so many informers, is there not one who can fix upon a criminal? They are *suspicious persons*. Such, even under the reign of guilt, was the form used in personal accusations. *Suspected persons!* Suspected of what? Of *incivism*, of *royalism*. Thus their thoughts, their sentiments only are suspected; and suspicion itself dares not go farther. What a triumph for innocence, to make

the calumny of its calumniators thus expire on their lips!

'No, assuredly,' pursue the calumniators of priests, 'it is not in public, it is not in the pulpit, that they dare to profess their seditious doctrine. They have a tribunal within themselves, by the inviolable secrecy of which impunity is secured; it is in the confessional, that they inculcate fanatical attachment to kings, and hatred to the republic.'

Against such an accusation, defence appears impossible. In fact, where is the proof that the confessor does not, in secret, do that of which he is accused? No, he does not; even that is proved, and proved to demonstration.

The secrecy of confession is impenetrable on one side only. If the penitent perceives that he who listens to him abuses his office, in order to inspire him with a spirit of revolt and sedition, he has a right to denounce him as sacrilegious and treacherous. How then has it happened, that, since the revolution,

among so many young enthusiasts for republican maxims; amid so many spies and informers, to whom, as we have seen, nothing was inviolable; who saw nothing sacred in friendship, in gratitude, in nature itself; who sought only pretexts to plunder and exterminate the priesthood; how, I say, has it happened, that not one should have appeared to denounce this species of seduction? No, in not one tribunal of revolutionary tyranny has it ever been heard of. You wish that the laws should suppose a crime to exist, which imposture itself dares not invent! and the only security required against the presumption of such an enormous sacrilege is, a declaration of obedience to the laws! What a tie upon men, who should be at once dishonest and impious enough to contradict in secret what they had professed in public, what they had recommended from the pulpit! What a tie upon men, who should carry this profound hypocrisy

to the very foot of the altars of a God of truth.

No, in our treatment of priests, we must adhere to the principle, the sacred principle, never to suppose guilt without proof; and to believe a man innocent, so long as we have no authority to believe him guilty; or, if we except priests from this grand rule of natural equity, we ought to expatriate them all.

But, besides the negative proof in favour of their ministry, there is another, which is positive and completely authentic. This proof is the public, solemn, unanimous testimony of the people, whose voice rises and resounds on all sides. All demand their priests; and trust me, my colleagues, they know them well. Those whom they demand are not deceitful, factious, and impious; they are not impostors, conspirators, and disturbers of public tranquillity. They are friends of peace, equitable arbiters, wise promoters of harmony,

faithful depositaries of their most secret sorrows; in short, it is in them that they wish to find anew their morality and their religion. They feel deeply what a dissolution, what a corruption of morals, what impudence in every vice, what audacity in every crime which can escape the laws; what enmities, what dissensions in the interior of families, what a fatal relaxation, even of the ties of nature, have ensued from the banishment of these evangelical pastors. They feel deeply the necessity of these guides, these advisers, these supporters, to instruct them to be just, to aid them to be good, even in the midst of the wicked. They have expressed it to us with an affecting candour.

'O you,' said they, 'whom we have elected to be the organs of our just petitions, obtain for us the restoration of our churches, our priests; obtain the restoration of those who teach us how to live, who teach us how to die;' and when we promised to justify their con-

fidence, they shed tears of joy, and loaded us with blessings. These are true, irreproachable witnesses; they do not reason; they feel their wants and their interests.

Trust me, legislators, they would feel in like manner, how injurious it would be to the spirit of their worship, and to the character of its ministers, that a distrustful law should thus surround them with embarrassing precautions.

In the council, the vote has been carried to prohibit the ceremonies, the dress, and all the external symbols of the catholic religion. But laws, of which the people do not perceive the reason, are bad laws for them. Now what reasons, for example, can be given to the people of the country for the suppression of bells? what signal, equally public, can call from such a distance to the offices of religion; and what is there ridiculous in this mode of assembling them? The bell is precious to them from its use, and from habit; their ear is accustomed

to it from their infancy, they have associated with it a religious sentiment; and, doubtless, they consider it as a misfortune to be deprived of it. Now, upon this point, how ill do we act up to our own maxims? How can a privation so needlessly afflicting, be reconciled with the intention of making our laws the object of love?

But the sound of a bell may be a signal of sedition. Oh! will sedition be ever in want of signals? Say, rather, that this salutary sound may be a signal of distress, as it actually is, in cases of fire; that it may announce to the neighbourhood the incursions of a robber, and in any imminent danger occurring at night, during the hours of sleep, may call the neighbouring villages to the aid of the one attacked. There is nothing, therefore, so childish as has been represented in the interest which men, instructed by misfortune, attach to a public safeguard, in the most sonorous in-

strument which the genius of the arts has ever invented.

The prohibition against the dress usually worn by priests, will not appear to the people less wanton and arbitrary. They know well that it is not at the altar only that their pastor ought to be invested with a venerable character; they know well that the decorum and dignity of a minister of religion requires him to be warned by a dress simple and modest, but distinctive, of what he owes to his profession and to himself.

But the law, it is said, chooses to consider him in no other light than that of a citizen. And pray what has the law to do with the form and colour of the clothes he puts on? Can they make a distinction, an exception in its eyes?

If the government was distrustful of priests, it would, on the contrary, have been a measure of security to enjoin a difference of dress. What then has

been the motive for prohibiting this distinction? Could it be the hope that, when mingled in the crowd of corrupt men, they might be more at liberty to adopt their morals, and thus degrade at once their person and their office. I can discover nothing, I must own, in these arbitrary laws, but marks of aversion for the catholic religion; and the more I think of them, the less can I imagine any good reason which can be given for them.

The attachment to royalty which is imputed to this religion, the aversion which it is supposed to entertain for republican government, is a charge which rests on no proof, and which facts have belied throughout all Europe. The grossest ignorance can alone give credit to the imputation; I do not deign to say a word more on the subject.

The deference, or, if you will, the obedience of the catholic priests to the authority of the Romish church was, in the clergy of France, no more than a

passive dependance; civil order has been long distinct and separate from it. As to the complete uniformity of doctrine, it belongs to thought, on which our laws impose no restraint.

But this unity of doctrine is said to render the catholic religion exclusive and intolerant. Yes, exclusive, so far as the persuasion goes, that, in point of doctrine and belief, truth is one; and that it is professed by the catholic church alone, without any alteration, any mixture of error; hence its intolerance, that is to say, a strict refusal to admit to its hopes any one who does not hold its faith. This, apparently, is the best founded reproach made against the catholic religion; I shall consider it at full length, in order completely to refute it.

When intolerance and proselytism are united in the same religion, must they not render it formidable, and, as it were, a scourge to all other religions? What! say they, it is not enough to declare itself incompatible with them; it attacks,

it pursues, it drives them from their domain, it carries off daily some of their votaries.

I dwell not upon the number of these conquests; but they are conquests made by persuasion, and therefore without reproach. I go farther, I allow it to be possible and probable, that the catholic religion, without aid and support, merely by virtue of its moral excellence, or by its adaptation to the disposition and character of the people, should make all the progress which is to be dreaded. I maintain that this indefinite power, will still be only the innocent effect of a just liberty; the simple exercise of that freedom of thought, which the laws ought to respect.

It is otherwise, I own, with that tyrannical and persecuting intolerance, which a blind and outrageous fanaticism has practised in the name of the catholic religion, while it was in power; I have uniformly combated this abuse of force, by which it attempts to govern thought.

I combated it in presence of false doctors, who, dishonouring the Gospel, sought to employ, in its name, constraint and violence; I told them, to their face, that their dungeons, their faggots, their punishments, were abominable in the eyes of God as well as of man; and that they placed the tiger upon the altar of the lamb. I only repeat, therefore, what I then said, that religious wars, and all the crimes which an absurd zeal and an impious policy have prompted, in the name of a God of peace, of mercy, and of love, have been the crimes of men, the errors and the faults of kings. And, not the Gospel only, but all those who have professed it in its original purity, and in its genuine spirit, have disavowed these crimes. Our arms, they have said, are neither sword nor fire; our religion has no power but that of persuasion; its characters are mildness and mercy; by these good fruits it ought to be known; we ought to defend it by suffering death in

its cause, not by inflicting it. If we employ in its defence, prohibitions, torments, in short any punishment whatever, it will not be defended, it will be polluted and shamefully profaned. Such, at all times, has been the language and spirit of its genuine disciples; any other was the mere frenzy of human passions, too often excited by the love of power, by the ambition of ruling the minds of men, and holding them in subjection. If, under monarchs who were weak and easily misled, these abuses have become formidable, they will be otherwise under a government which numbers freedom of thought among the rights of man, to be inviolably maintained by the laws.

Citizens and colleagues, let us invest these laws with the dignity which belongs to them.

Mistrust, disquiet, timid precautions, are symptoms of weakness: we must pity and forgive them. Assurance, firmness, a noble frankness, are the attributes

of power; it is unworthy of her to surround herself with suspicions.

Representatives of the people, I have already expressed sufficiently the repugnance I should feel to vote for the declaration which the ministers of religion are required to give, of submission to the government of the republic. Not but that I regard this submission as an indispensable duty, to which every good priest ought to bind himself without scruple. But, if citizens are all equal in the eye of the law, why is not the law itself equal towards all? Why should there be restrictions or exceptions in any particular case?

Priests, it is said, are allowed to exercise functions which require a special guarantee. But others have shewn, before me, how needless the guarantee of a declaration was, on the supposition of these priests being good, and how useless if they were bad. It is to God alone that they have promised fidelity to the laws under which they live. Either they

will keep this oath, or they would not keep any. And to whom will not he be faithless who has been faithless to his God?

And why then should they not promise to the law what they have promised to God? *Why*, indeed!—because they dread that the law, under the vague and indistinct term of submission, should tacitly imply something more than can be lawfully promised. I am aware that these alarms are false. But, legislators, scruples are natural to minds, perhaps deficient in knowledge, and whose innocence, whose piety, dread a fall—virtuous scruples, which it is generous, which it is just, which it is humane to respect!

At length, after long misfortunes and cruel persecutions, the man whose fears are not yet dissipated, is allowed to look around him; and if, in the conditions imposed upon him, he thinks he perceives any symptom of ill will, he is uneasy, he needs to be re-assured.

Yes, my colleagues, let us re-assure minds yet troubled by storms, yet stunned by the thunder which they have seen falling around them. They dread snares; shew them that there are none in our laws. They are humbled, afflicted by our mistrust; secure their fidelity by a noble and sincere esteem. Worn out with misfortune and calamity, they ask only for rest; but they wish it to be innocent; let us leave nothing which a timid conscience can dread. No, it is not upon hearts penetrated with the purest morality, that indulgence and kindness can be bestowed in vain.

I vote, that religious worship should enjoy all the liberty granted to it by the constitutional act.

NOTES

TO THE FOURTH VOLUME.

NOTE 1, p. 9.

A BED OF JUSTICE, was the name given to those meetings of the parliament at which the king attended in person, for the purpose of enforcing the registration of any decree that had been rejected by the parliament (see note 2, vol. III). As soon as the approach of the king was announced, a deputation of the parliament went to meet him. He then entered, and seated himself on a throne of a peculiar construction, called *Lit de Justice*, from which the sitting took its name. The first president, all the other presidents and counsellors, then placed one knee on the ground till the king desired them to rise. The sovereign used formerly to propose himself the subjects which were to be discussed in the meeting; but, of late, he merely said a few introductory words:

upon which the chancellor went up and received his majesty's orders on his knees, came down and delivered them to the assembly, and then proceeded to take the opinions, which, unless by special permission, were always delivered in a low voice. The chancellor then, after having again consulted with the king, pronounced these words—'The king has ordered, and does order, that we proceed to the registration of the letters upon which we have deliberated.'

NOTE 2, p. 9.

Lamoignon. This minister must not be confounded with M. Lamoignon de Malesherbes, so celebrated for his virtues and heroic devotion to his unfortunate master. They were both descended from the same ancient and highly respected family; but the keeper of the seals, of whom Marmontel here speaks, belonged to the eldest branch, which came directly from the first president de Lamoignon, who enjoyed that office under Lewis XIV, and to whom Cardinal Mazarin said—'If the king had known a worthier man, or a better subject than you, you would not have been chosen.' Malesherbes was

the great grandson of this celebrated magistrate.

The events of Marmontel's life have been detailed at sufficient length in these Memoirs; from which the reader may also be enabled to form a correct idea of the leading features in his character. He may be curious, however, to learn the light in which he was viewed by his countrymen and contemporaries. The representation is, on the whole, favourable; yet, in point of manners at least, it is somewhat different from what we might have been led to expect. One of his biographers says—

'To all the advantages of genius and talents, he joined those of external appearance. He was tall and well proportioned; his expression was pleasing and dignified; it had a commanding character, which easily assumed the air of severity, and in which disdain was sometimes more strongly expressed than he could have wished; even in his gaiety there was gravity and dignity. So long as he lived unmarried, he was considered as fortunate in love and a favourite of the fair sex. But, after marriage, he was the model

of husbands; never was there a better or happier one; in proof of this I adduce the charms, the virtues, the bitter regrets, the deep affliction of his amiable widow. 'He believes,' said St. Lambert, 'that marriage and paternity were invented expressly for him; he enjoys them as if they were a good exclusively his own.'*

Another writer expresses himself thus—

'He contracted, from his studies at Toulouse, a stiff and pedantic manner, of which the habit of living in the great world, and his long residence in the capital, could never entirely cure him. Destitute of those light graces which render a man agreeable in society, he possessed at least those talents which command the esteem of the reflecting, and those qualities of the heart which deserve friends. His conversation was mild, instructive, abounding in ideas, and enlivened by anecdote. He possessed that talent, so necessary, of respecting the self-love of others, and sometimes even of flattering it.'†

With regard to his writings, the Moral Tales are undoubtedly those which have commanded the greatest and most general admiration. The following account is given by a

* Encyclopedie Methodique, Supplement.

† Dictionnaire Historique.

late writer, of the enthusiasm with which they were read in France.

'This, of all modern works, is perhaps that which has been most universally read; there was not a country-house in which it was not found. Every person who went to breathe, for a few days, the air of the country, carried it with him to amuse his leisure, as Horace carried Plato, Menander, Eupolis, and Archilochus. Was any one alone? he found himself in good company with this book. Had he company? it was one of the most agreeable readings which could be made to them. It amused the most sedate, fixed the most frivolous, without requiring, either great ability in the reader, or great attention in the listeners; and these tales tended always to the correction of some fault, the suppression or diminution of some folly. They were so many little narrative comedies, which were not restrained by any of the rules of the drama. They have, in fact, furnished many subjects for comedies and for comic operas; they were a copious mine, which was ransacked without ceasing. M. Marmontel appeared there at once as a man of the world and a man of letters.'

His larger romances, Belisarius and the

Incas, are not less celebrated. He himself has informed us of the impression which was made by the former work throughout Europe. The empress of Russia divided it into parts, which were given to be translated by the most distinguished persons of her court; and she reserved one for herself. The following letter from the king of Sweden has appeared in the late collection of the works of that monarch.

'At the castle of Carlberg, *June* 19, 1797.

Monsieur de Marmontel, I should have thanked you sooner for the excellent work you were pleased to transmit to me, had I not been prevented by considerations, concerning which you have received information from another quarter. The suffrages of all nations have already fixed the value of Belisarius: I shall not, therefore, say any thing on that subject here. I could not, however, be silent, as to my own private obligations, which are so much the greater, as my age and situation enable me the better to profit by the great lessons which you give to kings, as well as to those who are destined to mount the throne.

'The good which your work is calculated to produce, will endure beyond the pleasure

which you yourself must experience in having contributed to the happiness of mankind. This consideration, Sir, ought, I think, to recompense you for having consecrated your talents to the publication of the most useful truths which have ever been uttered, or, at least, which never were uttered before with an equal degree of force, or in so convincing a manner.

'If you continue, as I trust you will, to increase the lustre of the present age by means of your useful labours, I beseech you not to forget one who is only anxious for further instruction; and who, with these sentiments, is, &c.'

Even La Harpe, who lashes without mercy almost all Marmontel's other productions, is softened by these. Of the Incas, he observes, that 'it is full of superior beauties; there,' says he, 'we find the morality, the elevation, the pathetic eloquence which rendered Belisarius so successful; and this work will be regarded as one of the most distinguished monuments of our literature.'

His critical writings, of which the chief are the Art of Poetry, and Elements of Literature, are little known beyond the precincts of his native country; but there they are

held in considerable estimation. Yet La Harpe asserts, that he was deficient in natural taste, and had conceived a number of critical paradoxes, of which he was not cured till after thirty years intercourse with literary men and the academy. One of these was his contempt for Boileau, whom he took every opportunity of depreciating. La Harpe mentions that Voltaire, on reading some verses of Marmontel, in which that writer was very roughly handled, said to him—'This is an unlucky whim which our friend Marmontel has taken. My good fellow, nothing does a man so much harm as speaking ill of Boileau.' No less was his antipathy to Racine; nay, he is said, at one time, when he found Madame Geoffrin reading the works of that writer, to have snatched them out of her hand, exclaiming—'*Quoi! vous lisez ce polisson-là.*'

His tragedies, though some of them were applauded at the first representation, have never since been able to support themselves on the theatre. La Harpe treats them with extreme severity, and says, that Cleopatra and the Heraclides, which were so unfavourably received, are the only two which are tolerable.

His operas, though they are not considered as displaying any great powers, are still seen with pleasure. Some, indeed, thought, that after the eminence he had attained in higher branches of literature, he had demeaned himself by becoming the author of such compositions. To others, however, it appeared that he had raised this class to his own level.

Upon the whole, Marmontel appears to have ranked among the most distinguished writers who adorned the last age of French literature. His writings, peculiarly suited to the taste of the age, acquired a fame, even more extensive, perhaps, than was strictly proportioned to their merit. His character appears also to have been highly esteemed. We find him possessing the regard and friendship of the most distinguished and virtuous characters of his time. His faults seem to have sprung less from any natural badness of disposition, than from the easiness of his temper and the influence of prevailing example.

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Vol. II.—P. 224, line 13, for *breadth* read *depth*.
III. 160, 2, for *d'Angliver* read *d'Angiviller*.
IV. 106, 10, for *was* read *were*.
132, 6, for *reignation* read *resignation*.
248, 20, for *miseraby* read *miserably*.
301, 19, delete *comma* after *l'Eure*.

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